

HOW TO DRINK



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HOW TO DRINK

A Classical Guide to the Art of Imbibing



Fig. 1: Bacchus,
Wine Enthusiast

Vincent Obsopoeus

Edited, translated, and introduced by Michael Fontaine

HOW TO DRINK



ANCIENT WISDOM FOR MODERN READERS



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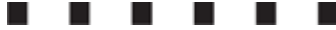
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HOW TO DRINK



A Classical Guide to the Art of Imbibing

Vincent Obsopoeus

*Edited, translated, and introduced
by Michael Fontaine*

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For Alyssa, Justine, Ming-Yi, Dan, and Gene
mecvm et AVERNA petists ibiqve FALERNA bibists

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The life of the mind isn't sustainable over the long haul if it doesn't get rest at regular intervals. (1.219–20)

This was a fun book, and I owe many people drinks for bringing it to life: Rob Tempio for taking it on, Justine Vanden Heuvel and Ming-Yi Chou for teaching me about wine, the friends who drank it with me, and the team at FLX Fitclub who helped me sweat it all back out. Lucy Plowe painted the beautiful illustration of Greek and Roman wine vessels, Julia Hejduk and Sophia Evans clarified the translation, and Kim Hastings stabilized it. I thank them all for their generosity. In recent years, George Thomas, who writes under the pen name Quintus Curtius, has quietly set an impressive new standard of translation to live up to. I hope he finds this one worthy, and I thank him for advice and encouragement.

I would also like to acknowledge my parents in a special way. Growing up outside New Orleans, I imbibed their NOLAn philosophy, a Mardi Gras view of life that celebrates Comus and curses Momus. Twenty-five years later, the puritanism of wider America still feels alien to me. For that better sense of balance, I thank them.

THE FINGER LAKES AVA
Ithaca, New York

INTRODUCTION

America has a drinking problem. Shots. Chugging. Contests. Frat culture. Bro culture. Puking. Passing out. Driving home.

The traditional name for self-destructive drunkenness is *methe* in Greek, *ebrietas* in Latin, and alcoholism in English. The latest name is Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD). According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 16 million people in the United States—more than 6 percent of us—have it, and more than 90 percent of them receive no treatment. Temperance failed, Prohibition failed, and here we are.¹

And it's not just America. Binge culture is spreading worldwide, with many calling it an American import. But that isn't quite right. People have always gotten drunk and suffered the consequences. In ancient Rome, you were supposed to water your wine (*merum*) down to a third of its strength and control yourself. Not everyone did. "In enjoying the freedom that men do," remarked Seneca,

Women are now enjoying men's problems, too. They stay out late at night no less, they drink no less, they challenge men to wrestling and drinking alcohol (*merum*), and out of equally upset stomachs, they spit and barf all the wine back up.²

With a few exceptions, though, binge and bro culture were largely alien to ancient Greece and Rome. The idea that hardcore drinking is a mark of he-man prowess first emerged in Germany in the fifteenth century and spread like a virus in the sixteenth.

I'll say that again: binge and bro culture—so familiar to Americans—started not in classical Greece or Rome but in Germany five hundred years ago. The crusades were over, the economy was changing, and the knights of the medieval world no longer had any purpose in their lives. They turned to wine to fill the void. Jousting gave way to drinking contests, and with Germany's vineyards four times larger—and per capita consumption six times higher—than today, the pressure to indulge was ample:

In the 15th century Germans were drinking over 120 litres of

wine a head a year. The allowance for a patient in hospital (also for a doctor) was seven litres a day. It is said that teetotalism ruled out any chance of preferment in the priesthood.³

This is the wine-soaked world Vincent Obsopoeus knew. When he published *The Art of Drinking*, Obsopoeus—whose name sounds like *Job? So pay us!*—had been the rector of an elite high school for eight years in Ansbach, a city just south of Würzburg and Franconia’s winegrowing region. Inspired by Ovid’s ancient *Art of Love*, he lifted his pen to compose a how-to manual to teach the “art” of drinking responsibly, sustainably, and with discrimination. He wanted young men to clean up their act and get married. Like Ovid, he sought to devise a total system for channeling primal energies that are typically regarded as ungovernable. The result is an antidote to chaos and a timeless classic.

In America today, the opposite of sleeping around is not celibacy but monogamy. In *The Art of Drinking*, Obsopoeus recommends an analogous attitude toward alcohol. For him, moderation, not abstinence, is the key to lasting sobriety. Readers familiar only with the Alcoholics Anonymous approach to managing addiction will be surprised.

Obsopoeus drafted *The Art of Drinking* while hanging around the learned monks of Heilsbronn Abbey in Ansbach, and a former wine steward there, one Sebastian Hamaxurgus, composed a poetic blurb for it that Obsopoeus splashed across the title page. In it, the celibacy-bound monk remarks on the poem’s superficial resemblance to Ovid’s *Art of Love*:

*Naso quidem pulchre leges praescipsit amandi,
ut certa insanus curreret arte furor.
Pulchrius at multo tradit Vincentius artem
potandi, quo sit certus ubique modus.
Ut sit amare nefas, tamen est potare voluptas,
ex qua virtutem regula iuncta facit.*

Yes, Ovid did do an impressive job of dictating rules for love, so that a definite art would channel that insane madness. Far more impressively, though, Vincent teaches the art of *drinking*, so that a definite limit is constantly in force. And while loving is a no-no, drinking is a pleasure, and giving it rules transforms it into a virtue.

Clever enough, since the beginning of *The Art of Drinking* does contain a half-dozen allusions to Ovid's poem. What Hamaxurgus' analogy doesn't spell out, though, is that where Ovid is ironic, Obsopoeus is deadly serious. Most of us think Ovid doesn't really mean what he says, whereas the sincerity of Obsopoeus' moral purpose is beyond doubt.⁴ His text pulls back the curtain on the birth of a new and poisonous culture of hazing, peer pressure, competitive drinking, and even, in book 2, on what some now call "toxic" masculinity (see 2.196–97 and 2.443–56).

Warning us against the siren song of excessive drinking, therefore, the first two books of *The Art of Drinking* teach us not how to abstain from drinking but how to get control of it, how to win friends and impress people at social gatherings, and how to live up to our potential. In the third book, the mask slips and Obsopoeus tells us how to win competitive drinking games, citing extensive personal experience.

Obsopoeus published *The Art of Drinking* in 1536 and republished an expanded edition the next year. It proved popular, but in time the Catholic Church placed it on its Index of Forbidden Books. As explained below, the present book is offered as a third edition of the poem.



Vincent Obsopoeus, *poeta* METHODICUS:
Arte Methes methodum inventam praecepit honestae.
His *Art* propounded a system he found to get hammered with
honor.

—CALIXTUS FONTANUS

Born around 1498 in the village of Heideck, thirty miles south of Nuremberg, Vincent Obsopoeus is not regarded as a major poet, but he should be.⁵ The Reformation got under way in his neighborhood in his lifetime, and he played a bit part in it. His humanist surname implies his father was a private chef (Greek *opsopoiós*, German *Koch*) of some local importance. His brother Michael Obsopoeus, a Bavarian preacher, spent six years in a monastery jail on unspecified charges. In 1532 Vincent married Margaretha Herzog of Nuremberg, and six or seven years later he added a touching remark about her to a footnote:

As far as I'm concerned, there is nothing sweeter, nicer, or more precious than my wife. So help me God, I hope we never

change. Even if we live longer than Nestor and the Sibyl of Cumae, I hope I'll always be young for her, and she for me.⁶

His words are all the more poignant because by the time they saw print, Obsopoeus was dead. He had fallen sick and died a few months earlier, between April and August of 1539.⁷ His life had been a troubled one.

Vincent Obsopoeus was a strange and difficult character, a man beset by enemies who knew nothing of his existence. He was funny and fun but sensitive and stubborn, impetuous and intolerant, the kind of person who just can't let something go. The famous humanists he regarded as friends—Philip Melanchthon, Eobanus Hessus, Joachim Camerarius—tolerated rather than liked him. He was quick to smirk at others' failings; he *wanted* to alienate himself by being obnoxious (thought Camerarius), while Melanchthon declared him a total basket case.⁸ The beginning of a letter Camerarius wrote him reveals the dynamics of their relationship:

Whoa-ho, Obsopoeus, whoa! Enough already! My mind kept saying that over and over as I read your letter, but your letter just went on spewing venom right up to the very end.⁹

Another letter Camerarius wrote him is the cover sheet for three poetic blurbs he composed for *The Art of Drinking*.¹⁰ In it, Camerarius tries to forestall some other impulse:

If you're serious about this and won't listen to friendly or even sensible advice, then fine, do as you will. You're the one taking the risk. I won't try to stop you or your impulsivity any longer, but do give some thought, even at this hour, to what an awful war you're tipping off. But of course, you've thought everything through as you think it's best.

Camerarius may well have meant Obsopoeus' plan to publish *The Art of Drinking*. As Horace once quipped, *laudibus arguitur vini vinosus Homerus*: "You can tell Homer was a wino—his praise of wine proves it." In the letter, Camerarius warns Obsopoeus that everyone will make the same assumption of him:

I'm enclosing the verses you asked for; feel free to disfigure your book with them, if you insist.¹¹ And if you do publish it, you won't easily convince everyone of your sobriety (as you claim). I mean, who *doesn't* laugh when he reads the same protest in Catullus, that "a pious poet himself should be chaste, but there's no need for his verses to be so"? Ditto Ovid's

“Believe me, my character is different from my poetry.” People assume speech tracks one’s true feelings. I get it, though, you don’t care what people think; so as requested, here you go.¹²

Events proved Camerarius right. When he died, Obsopoeus had been putting together a translation of epigrams from the Greek Anthology.¹³ The book (which includes that moving tribute to his wife) came out posthumously. In it, Obsopoeus tucks away a tiny look back in a comment he makes on an epigram about drinking games. He had discussed that topic extensively in book 3, although—again like Ovid—it is impossible to tell how seriously his “advice” was meant:

I wrote a lot about that in *The Art of Drinking*, and I hear a lot of people are trashing me behind my back for publishing it. They say I went too far. Whatever. Obsopoeus doesn’t care (*Sed haec non sunt curae Obsopoeo et Hippoclidii*).¹⁴ They can go on hating and criticizing me until they explode.

Such was the darker side of Obsopoeus. But he had a lighter side, too, especially in regard to his fondness for wine. When Melanchthon offered to help him get a job, he replied that the advertised salary was so low, “it won’t even quench my thirst.”¹⁵ (Melanchthon didn’t find that funny.)

His lighter side also appears in a letter he wrote Camerarius on December 14, 1536.¹⁶ Like Obsopoeus, Camerarius was from Franconia, but he had moved to Tübingen, a city overlooking the Neckar river:

I’m eager to know what those Neckar wines of yours are like. Ours (in Franconia, I mean) are really virile and strong. They’re responsible for not a few wounds and murders, this year especially. Till now, I thought I was a champion drinker, capable of handling the most intensely violent wines. When I drink wine this year, though, I turn into a kid again after a couple glasses. The upshot is that despite all my arts of drinking (*cum omnibus meis artibus bibendi*), I often land in the muck and mud and get stuck there (*saepe in stercore et luto sit iacendum*).¹⁷

All his life and even into death, Camerarius seems to have remained Obsopoeus’ one loyal friend. He wrote a funeral sonnet declaring that his friend had made it into heaven:

Alas! Death and mighty fate have defeated Vincent,
after overwhelming him with a painful illness . . .

Farewell, Vincent, and be glad! You are not in Hades' halls,
since the road of death no longer leads good men there,
but high, high above the summit of golden Olympus.

That is where the abode of Christian heroes lies.¹⁸

Maybe Camerarius was on to something. As fate would have it, the next year's summer was the hottest in history and the best German vintage of all time. It got so freakishly warm in 1540 that the Rhine dried up, and the resulting wine was so good that a fancy barrel was built in Würzburg to commemorate and hold it all.¹⁹ Maybe that wasn't a coincidence:

Orbe poli exemptum accipientes, omina omittunt

Vincentem Francis vinicientia agris:

RhenVM vvasqve coqvens sicCAVIT sIrIVS ille, ac

HerbiPOLi eximium reddidit inde merum.

Heaven accepted Vincent when he departed this world,

and it released wine-presaging omens in Franconia:

The scorching sun of 1540 cooked the Rhine and grapes and dried
them up,

and recompensed Würzburg with an exceptional vintage.

Then again, maybe it was. Either way, Vincent would have loved it.
Enjoy the poem.



About This Edition

The Art of Drinking first appeared in 1536. That printing became the basis of every reprint, of a loose German translation in 1537, and of an incompetent English translation in 1945.²⁰ In 1537, however, Obsopoeus published a second edition. It includes an expanded text, a new preface, and several new liminary poems. I have taken it as the basis of the present edition, which I offer as a third edition of *The Art of Drinking*. This edition omits a gigantic insertion in book 1, a long digression in book 3, Obsopoeus' two prefaces, and most liminary poems (the one liminary poem it does print, by Joachim Camerarius, is from an improved text found in Camerarius 1568). I have freely modernized spelling, capitalization, and punctuation, and changed the

text in a couple dozen places (see the appendix).

A Note on the Translation

Styles of translation vary. My aim here was not a slavish, and surely not a verbatim, translation of Obsopoeus' text. That would be a hopeless task. Instead, as the samples above show, my aim was to transmute Obsopoeus' thought and spirit into clear and idiomatic English as it is spoken in the United States today, especially as I hear it spoken on college campuses. This has necessitated the use of some metaphors that will jar readers if taken literally. For example, Obsopoeus frequently addresses *iuvenes*, a word I translate as "college kids" or simply "kids." Why? Because in 2020, nothing else will do: "young men" or "young people" is hectoring, "guys" is off, and "youths"—the dictionary meaning—is ridiculous.

Obsopoeus wrote in the classical Latin of pagan Rome two thousand years ago to describe life as he lived it in Christian Germany five hundred years ago, and, like Ovid, he speaks as a professor delivering a lecture. His overarching argument is carefully plotted out; to help readers follow it, I have introduced subheadings in the English. Furthermore, Obsopoeus frequently assumes "presentation mode," constructing a syllogism or piling up example after example to prove his point. When he does, I have reformatted his couplets as bullet points, sometimes at multiple sublevels, to indicate the rhetoric. An example is 1:877–82:

*Musica laetificat maerentia pectora cantu;
cum Bromio compar Musica numen habet.
Nectare lugentes Euhan, haec carmine maesta
mente melancholicos excitat atque iuvat;
ille calore replet, movet haec praecordia, et intrat
cum vino harmoniae viscera tota sonus.*

- *Music* cheers grieving hearts with song;
- *Music* has divine powers on par with Bromius [i.e., Bacchus]:
 - *Bacchus* lifts and cheers the weeping with *nectar*,
 - *Music* lifts and cheers the depressed with *song*.
 - *He* fills the breast with *warmth*,
 - *She* stirs its *feelings*, and
 - as does *wine*,
 - so do *sounds in harmony* penetrate the chest and heart.

Another problem is that Obsopoeus is a great player on and with

words; many couplets exploit some double meaning. For example, in Latin *sinus* means your lap or bosom and a *sinum* (a separate word) is a bowl you drink wine from. Meanwhile, *fundere* means to pour our liquid literally and to pour your thoughts or feelings out metaphorically, to confess them. Obsopoeus combines both into a brilliant pun in 1.95–96, where he is advising you to drink at home with your wife:

. . . *semper fidissima coniunx,*
*cuius in audebis **fundere** quaeque **sinum**.*

You can trust your wife completely, always. You can drink with her and **pour** your heart out on her **bosom** without fear.

In such cases, usually I had to ignore one meaning, though at other times, as here, I felt I had to translate a word twice. Similarly, *Germanus* and *germanus* are two different words; the first means “German” and the second means “brother.” Since this accident of language underpins the concept of “bro” culture, my only choice for the *iuvenes*’ drinking song in 2.428, *Hic, hic germani discubere boni!*, was to say, “Here, here! Good ol’ German *hermanos* are partying here!”

A final matter calls for comment. Obsopoeus uses many names for a person who drinks too much, and they force a difficult choice on us. How do we decide between “drunk” and “alcoholic” or “desire” and “craving” or “addiction” and “alcoholism”? And indeed, what *is* the difference? The joke has it that alcoholics are simply drunks who go to meetings. True or not, I doubt “alcoholism” and “alcoholic” would have made any sense to Obsopoeus, so I usually refer to drunks and desire. Nevertheless, I have made exceptions where the context seems to warrant it.

A NOTE ON THE NOTES

As with all Renaissance Latin poetry, *The Art of Drinking* contains innumerable reminiscences of classical Latin texts. It would be pointless, even misleading, to record them all; the notes I do offer aim to clarify only the most interesting, relevant, or obscure ones.

A QUICK START GUIDE TO *THE ART OF DRINKING*

- Bacchus, the god of wine, has four common cult titles: *Bromius*, *Iacchus*, *Lenaeus*, and *Lyaeus*. Obsopoeus uses them all, and each can be a poetic word for wine; hence “worshipping Bacchus” can also mean to literally drink wine.
- The most famous wine of antiquity was Falernian. Like champagne, its name comes from the region it was produced in, and like “champagne,” Obsopoeus uses it as a general word for wine.
- Greeks and Romans had scads of different vessels for storing, preparing, serving, and drinking wine. Obsopoeus sometimes uses their names in their original sense and sometimes for analogous vessels of his own time. The illustration and chart on the following pages show which are which.

A QUICK START GUIDE

	Modern Equivalent	
STORAGE		
balneus		
balneus		
PREPARATION		
balneus (a bowl for mingling water and wine)		
balneus		
SERVING		
balneus or “round” of drinks (a ladle)		
balneus or “round” of drinks (a dipping cup)		
balneus or carafe		
DRINKING		
balneus glass (Italian <i>calice</i> , English <i>chalice</i>)		
balneus		
balneus		
balneus or wineglass		
balneus		

The Latin word *poculum* (cup) denotes any of these drinking vessels, but, like the serving vessels, it is usually used metaphorically for “a drink” or “a round” (as in the phrase *inter pocula*, “over drinks”).



PHIALE (PATERA)



KYLIX (CALIX)



CYATHUS



CARCHESIUM



SCYPHUS



CANTHARUS



CRATER



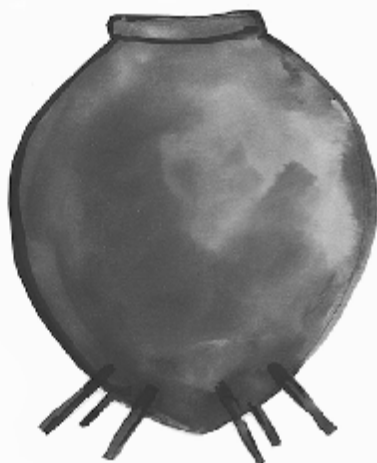
AMPHORA (CADUS)



CAPEDO



TRULLA



DOLIUM

Lauren
2019

use and Greek spelling, see the table.

THE ART OF DRINKING



JOACHIM CAMERARIUS TO THE READER

Drunkenness closed this book with tears in her eyes,
and (they say) whispered these words through quavering lips:
“Now they’ll hate me a little less—all of them, near and far,
because my fans will soon be drinking systematically.
Till now, it was all hit-or-miss; now there’ll be a doctrine,
now there’ll even be an art to losing control!
Can it be true? Should I really believe this book can
teach people how to rationally lose control?
My glory’s great, yes, but your glory will be great too,
all of you who love to drink the night away.
Learn!” she said, “Learning is good. . . .”

There was more she wanted
to say, but her speech was starting to slur.
As her head slumped onto her chest,
she kept hiccuping and mumbling something.
It was hard to make out, but some thought
they heard her saying *Thank you!* to our author.

DE ARTE BIBENDI



IOACHIMUS CAMERARIUS LECTORI

Hoc viso Ebrietas oculo stillante libello,
 haec fertur tremulo verba locuta sono:
“Nunc minus inter ero externos despecta meosque,
 cum mea iam certa pars ratione bibet.
Ante erat ille furor, nunc est doctrina futura,
 nunc etiam ars animi desipientis erit.
Quid dicam? An fieri credam potuisse, quod iste
 insanire docet cum ratione liber?
Gloria magna mea est, sed et haec quoque magna futura
 est tua, vinosae noctis amica cohors.
Discite!” ait, “Bona res est discere. . . .”
 Plura volebat
 dicere, sed dubii vox erat illa soni.
Ergo caput figens cervice in pectore flexa
 incertum balbo murmur ab ore dabat.
Sed, sicut quidam se percepisse putarunt,
 auctori grates visa referre fuit.

BOOK 1

THE ART OF DRINKING, SUSTAINABLY AND WITH DISCRIMINATION

Address to the Reader

If anyone in this city doesn't know the art of drinking, they ought to read me. Once they've read this *Art*, they'll be drinking like a pro.

- An *art* lets towering statues—tough stuff!—be lifted to the stars,
- An *art* lets sailors race over crashing waves, and
- An *art* gave Daedalus, trapped in Crete, the guts to soar skyward.

There's no job art *can't* overcome, so if you and I don't want to be unsophisticated when drinking wine at parties, we're going to need an art of worshipping Bacchus, too.

Unless they worship Him with the precise art they should, those who worship Him will feel His wrath. Bacchus is mellow, you see, but if you underestimate His power and worship Him the wrong way, He becomes impossible to handle.

- If you drink in an uneducated manner, wine will hurt you.
- If you're educated about your drinking, though, wine is enjoyable and good.

What you need, therefore, is a specific art of drinking to follow. If that's what you've come for, then learn what I have to teach you. And trust your author's expertise, since this book is the product of experience. It's not fake or some kind of scheme. This *Art* was born from the sweat of hard drinking. It's the real deal, kids, and I'm passing it on to you.

Invocation of Bacchus

O Bacchus! Bacchus, I pray, father of poets and sweetest of gods, stir my heart with Your flowing nectar! I *am* a poet, but I have no interest in encircling my divine head with garlands of ivy and laurel; prizes

like that are for pompous poets, the kind who sing of war's savagery in sublime verses. No, I pray, circle *my* forehead with garlands of tendrils and vine leaves! A Bacchic garland is right for a bard of Bacchus.

Cause our vats to so brim and froth with a smiling grape-gathering that any random cluster will fill a big bottle! May the joy of regeneration produce fruit so abundant that the winegrower himself trembles at the sight of his harvests!

Nothing will fill my breast with the Muses' flames more than Your giving me fresh must as I write this poem.

I'm making no heated demand for the Muses' Castalian springs, and my thirst is not for their Aonian waters; I have no such ambition. Mt. Helicon *did* often gush bard-inspiring waters from its chilly springs for Hesiod, sure, but as for me, well, I'd rather You gush the Falernian of Franconia, o Father, most provident and tastiest of gods, and from a more carefree source. I'd rather drink a single glass of You, Bacchus, than a thousand cups of Hippocrene's waters! And so I beg: if You want Your rituals celebrated in a new song, then bathe my parched throat with the dew that flows from Your vines!

My Readership

My mind's not burning to write for a mob of drunks; they waste Your bounty night and day, and it's stupid. No, I'm going to sing of responsible parties and the appropriate use of wine. There'll be no drunken luses in my poem, no embarrassing slob, nobody known for getting hammered all the time. You get annoyed by those folks, You really do. They're shameless in their behavior, their attitude, and their effrontery; they surpass every reasonable limit in their guzzling. And if they think it isn't costing them anything, if they don't care at all about honor, then I hereby shove them far away from my *Art*. In my view, they're pigs, not people, or worse, if anything can be grosser than a pig. My song sings for those who care about self-respect, who are guided by honor and motivated by their good name: people, that is, your mom would be fine having a drink with, or teenage girls still innocent to the ways of this world.

And since I don't want a long preamble to overwhelm my book, let my first horse now bolt from its starting gate!

An Overview of Book 1

To begin with, there are three ways we drink:

- at home by ourselves, or
- going out someplace we meet friends to have drinks with, or
- at social functions, in celebratory fashion and among like-minded people. Often,
 - we get invited over by friends and relatives, or
 - a groom will invite us to his wedding.

How can we be responsible with the wine we're given on these occasions? That's the subject of the book that follows.¹



Drinking at Home

PRO: YOUR (FUTURE) WIFE

Okay! If you want to drink wine right, have fun, and enjoy life, then no matter who you are, live it up at home.² Your home, as they say, is comfortable; it's the best. Nowhere beats the freedom and advantages of staying home, especially if you have a wonderful and lawfully wedded wife to share your bed—ideally, a wife who's a sterling model of feminine modesty:

- attentive to her household, and
- attentive to her husband,
- not foul-mouthed or lewd,
- not harsh-featured or unsophisticated,
- not wagging a stern, bushy eyebrow,
- who *isn't* mean and argumentative and verbally abusive,
- who is a pro at appeasing an angry husband,
- who's chaste, ladylike, and not too fussy,
- who rejects sexual adventures in a foreign bed, who
 - is innocent of guile,
 - doesn't know how to cheat,
 - is a simple woman, sure,
 - but isn't a stupid one.

With a wife like that, pay homage to Bacchus there, in your gentle home. She alone will be all the company you want or need.

What buddies *could* you prefer to a faithful wife? What brothers can you imagine skipping out on her for? A wife's more trustworthy than friends, more faithful than a brother, and a beautiful bride even beats your mom for loyalty.

Loyalty's rare among friends, but you can trust your wife

completely, always. You can drink with her and pour your heart out on her bosom without fear.³ She shares your anxiety in times of trouble and her dedication and energy sustain all the home. A wife sympathizes with your worries completely, and she matches the flames of your heart with equal love. She does her chores eagerly as both your servant and your wife. She loves and cherishes you in her breast, heart, and bosom. She cheers you up when you're upset; she lifts you out of a depression. She shares in your tragedies as an equal partner, always. She pleases you with the chaste gift of Venus, and often enough makes you a father, proud of a new son or daughter.

At home, you can say or do anything; *you're* the king in your house. Nobody you could offend is drinking with you. Your wife's the only one enjoying alcohol's sweetness with you, and she's long been used to how you are. She already knows your life, knows how to deal with you; she has the patience of a pro for your sermonizing. And if you're nice to her, you'll strengthen your wife's devotion and love: give her wine, drink with her, and you'll get greater pleasure from a single drink than from going out and draining dry whole bottles of wine. What's more, the woman you love won't feel like her husband disrespects her; no, she'll feel like the center of your universe, and she won't think you're out living it up on your own while she's left sitting at home by herself, wishing she could have a drink, too. You can express total happiness, laugh without embarrassment, and say anything and everything that comes to mind.

By drinking at home like this, you'll avoid a bunch of irritations you have to put up with when you go out drinking:

- snitting behind your back
- obnoxious quips
- jokes at your expense
- obnoxious teasing by some smartass
- smirks, sarcasm, and chuckling from some jerk
- endless banter from some buffoon.

And that's not to mention the mouthing off—no glory there!—and embarrassing brawls that are always breaking out over some stupid little thing.

Seriously, how often have you regretted abandoning your house and going out drinking with someone else, or having to put up with people arguing and fighting and other ordeals that are unworthy of a gentleman? A peaceful house prevents all that and worse, whereas the barrage is nonstop when you're out drinking. No malicious ears will be breathlessly hunting your words to tattle to the world, which is what happens all the time in public life when a word accidentally pops out of someone's mouth: it's been betrayed by its throat, and it

will—make no mistake—boomerang back to slit it.



Already in this short poem, my Muse has covered the opportunities your home affords for drinking wine safely and enjoyably. Really, though, who could count all a home's advantages? Peaceful love and restful sleep rule there; there thrive harmony, the relaxed life, and trust, which is the sacred glue that holds a marriage together.

There will never be a better or safer retreat than your home: it's a haven rarely troubled by swelling storms.

THE MAN OR WOMAN HAPPY AT HOME DOES NOT NEED MY ART

Those alone who enjoy staying at home to drink have no need of the *Art I'm propounding*. It's not for those who are privileged to live as they choose that I've devoted myself to systematizing the forms and norms of imbibing; their drinking lies outside my jurisdiction. No, they can and should drink as they like, and enjoy regulating their lives as teacher and master of their domain. They make their own rules.

CON: THE HELP

That said, they'd better not get cocky and loose-lipped and give voice to matters more freely than decorum permits—to matters that could offend sensitive ears or that could wind up harming them should they get betrayed by a servant.

Count up all the servants you have and there you'll count an equal number of enemies: the loyalty of both groups ebbs and flows accordingly; they blab what they've overheard the moment they quit working for the *last* boss they mistreated. To steer clear of dangers like that, make sure to be extra careful about what you say; otherwise, you must know your servants' good faith and loyalty, and have plenty of clear evidence of it.

I can't count the times I've carelessly spouted off at home when my tongue was slipping and slurring around its drunken lair, and when my words get blabbed they tip off:

- howls of protest
- disputes
- insults
- enemies
- face-offs
- all-out war
- threats.

MODERATION THE SOLUTION

The way to thwart all this is to always drink *honorably* and enjoy your wine in *moderation* when you're at home. If people make a habit of moderation in their own houses, they'll automatically practice moderation when they go out. To put it succinctly: A GENTLEMAN AND HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD SHALL ENSURE THAT HIS STAFF BE GOVERNED BY AN APPROPRIATE HONOR POLICY.

Both indoors and out, it's good to remember decorum, and both indoors and out, "decorum" means the sober lifestyle. The married men of my own social class, who enjoy wine quietly and discreetly, should be told this briefly. If they follow these rules faithfully, my *Art* will have them drinking like pros. No doubt about it.



Interlude #1: Second Invocation of Bacchus

More, Lyaeus! Use wine's *alcohol* to spur Your hastening bard onward. You'll never have a stronger kick than that—impossible! And I *am* galloping on my own, sure, but if You're smart, then grant Your galloper his prayer all the same!

- You inspire my poetry,
- You fortify me for it,
- Your warmth (heavenly!) thaws my frozen heart!
- You are better than the Muses,
- You are greater than Apollo,
- You alone, in my estimation, are the father of learned bards!

[takes a drink]

Ah! Already a new style, a *new* manner of drinking is arising before my eyes, and You understand I'll need renewed strength for it. People, you see, like getting out of the house and going out. It's fun to get drinks in public.



Going Out Drinking with Friends

A guy who goes out likes to meet up with buddies; a rowdy group of buddies is a lot of fun. Sure, home can be friendly, home can be

practically perfect, but all the same, not everybody's wife is a (girl)friend at home.

PRO: ESCAPING THE WIFE

Some guys have wives who are quarrelsome and depressed at home, like Socrates' notorious wife Xanthippe.⁴ Living with a black demon is a lot easier than putting up with a beast like *that* until the end of time!

PRO: CHANGE OF SCENERY

Listless turtles have no problem forever living in their castles, and little old ladies can forever mumble to themselves in front of their blazing fireplaces, but *gentlemen* belong out in the light. It's embarrassing for them to keep watch over their homes like pathetic hermit crabs.

PRO: CHANCE TO DECOMPRESS

And who *could* spend all their time working without a break? Who can stay up studying every single night? A bow cracks when hands are constantly stretching it and musical strings snap when they're overtightened. The life of the mind isn't sustainable over the long haul if it doesn't get rest at regular intervals:

- The mind's worries and anxieties must be relaxed; a healthy mind will have to seek relief to pep up.
- The body's weary limbs need to unwind, too, and
- Holidays must be marked by special alcoholic drinks.

You weren't embarrassed to get hammered at holidays, Tibullus, and I shouldn't be embarrassed to get hammered at holidays, either.⁵

PRO: AVOIDING SECLUSION AND MISANTHROPY

There's also the fact that people are shirking their duty to human life by shutting everyone out and hiding away at home all day and night, and they gradually become like animals. It makes them listless, depressed, and antisocial when they can't stand the sight of daylight. They shun people's company, hate it, they avoid it, brooding on this single, unforgettable thought: "I don't like anyone. I don't have any real friends. Being with no one is the only way my life is happy."

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHOOSING DRINKING BUDDIES

Therefore, if you're eager to get out of the house and have a drink with me, to put on a happy face and celebrate a fun day, to reject the behavior of that reclusive Timon of Athens, and to find good company and good wine, then what I think is hugely important, when you're

going to drink wine and worship Iacchus, is *who you want to be with*. You should ask yourself:

- Who you want to have as your drinking companions,
- Who you want to have as your buddies, and
- What sort of people you want them to be.

GO FOR SIMILARITY, NOT DIVERSITY

The reality, you see, is that everybody is *not* suited to everybody else, unless they're peers in attitude, character, and ability. Harmony is rare among unequals; turmoil frequently arises from combining diversity and friendship.

- A sailor should drink with sailors,
- a soldier with soldiers.
- An expert in sheepherding should drink with a shepherd,
- a doctor with a doctor,
- a farmer with a farmworker;
- a cobbler on his bench should get drinks with a cobbler;
- wine should be tasted by a monk with a monk,
- an undertaker with a mortician, and
- a hooker with a cozening whore, while
- a bouncer should drink toasts to a bouncer,
- a writer to a writer,
- a drunkard to a drunkard,
- a teamster to a teamster.
- A coachman should join company with a coachman;
- a slave should look for his Syrus—a buddy also locked in bondage.⁶

In the final analysis, everyone should seek out a *peer*—that is, a person who suits them and their character—and make that person their drinking buddy. Friends have little trouble coming together when they're equal or similar in

- nature,
- interests,
- character,
- ability, and
- status.

BEWARE APPEARANCES, THOUGH!

You shall and must, however, beware of choosing falsely. Some who resemble you often don't really resemble you. People who resemble a friend in appearance aren't invariably liked by the friend if they don't

resemble them in character. Someone can resemble you in interests but be no match in character, while another can resemble you in character but not at all in ability. To avoid making a mistake on this point, you should listen to your teacher. Clear your mind and store up my admonitions in it.

IDEAL DRINKING BUDDIES

You want to select friends whose hearts are pure:

- friends whose outlook is
 - positive,
 - respectful, and
 - committed to dignity;
- friends who take piety and religion seriously but whose minds aren't in thrall to dunderheaded superstitions;
- friends who are tactful and modest in their
 - language,
 - words, and
 - actions;
- friends learned Minerva has clasped to her chaste bosom;
- friends endowed each with their own gifts by the Muses, the Graces, Cyllenian Mercury, and that fearsome marksman, Delian Apollo:
 - impressive speaking skills
 - ability to play the lyre
 - assured poetry
 - a compassionate worldview
 - a sweet attitude
 - liberal arts education
 - candor
 - modesty
 - charm
 - easygoingness
 - friendship
 - love, and
 - loyalty;
- friends who are educated in classical Greek and connoisseurs of Latin, whose knowledge encompasses both the ancient and modern worlds;
- friends
 - who pursue virtue and love moral goodness,
 - who aren't attracted to vice by evil impulses, and
 - whose quality and loyalty are proven and unmistakable, time after time.

BENEFIT FROM THEIR INFLUENCE

Friends like that will never pressure you to drink. They'll never take the lead in getting hammered. No, by their sobriety they'll give you example after example of good choices on which to model your behavior.

Remember this advice of mine and you won't fall in with a bad crowd, provided you make a point of hanging out with *quality* friends. They're the ones you'll drink with when you walk into a party in full swing; make a point of sitting next to them. You'll learn good choices from good people, you see, but hanging out with bad people will wreck your mind—and fast. Party with good people, therefore, and someday you'll swear I give my students good advice.

YOU'LL BE JUDGED BY THE COMPANY YOU KEEP

The point is that when you're drinking, people will judge you by the company you keep, always. People's opinion of you arises from the friends you associate with. Belonging to a bad fraternity kills a sterling reputation. Therefore, you should make friends with *gentlemen*, moderate guys, if you cherish a reputation for brilliance and nobility. That way, you won't need an *Art of Drinking*, beyond moderating your intake in an honorable way.

BEFRIEND THE RICH AND POWERFUL

What's more, if you can make friends with powerful leaders, then make a point of doing so as best you can. Win them over with the carefree sweetness of your character and your habitual courtesy. Befriend them, too, through fawning and flattering and bowing and scraping, on any pretext you can come up with. By drinking with them often, you make fast friends who'll be there when serious problems hit you. Through them you'll attain great wealth and high public appointments, and you'll head for the dizzying heights of great affairs. By preference, go for buddies "with benefits"—that is, friends who net you public appointments and personal advantages.

BE DISCRIMINATING, NOT PROMISCUOUS

Those who think they have to get drinks with any random person out there don't care, not really, what people think of them. No proclamations of praise ring out for their lives; no, their lives are hidden away, buried in a dark place; their loyalty doesn't get tested and proven; no, their weightless names just . . . float away. Their influence doesn't get celebrated for its merits or shine forth to the world.

Celebrate Bacchus' orgies with debased people and *you'll* be debased—and how could some base addict be any good to you? Hang

out with illustrious people, and you'll be illustrious; with great people, and you'll be regarded as great. Hence, make a point of being choosy.

CHARACTERS TO AVOID

Buzzkills

First, get far away from all difficult buzzkills, with their hearts of iron in their breast. They aren't human—they're born from tigers and nursed on savage lion-milk! They're devoid of human feeling; everything's crap to them; they're straightjacketed by some bitter experience. They're unsuited for happiness, unsuited for fun and parties. They're dour, loveless creatures of the wild; they're dogs, yapping their tiresome words in everyone's face while they gnaw away at their raving hearts in silent anger.

Seriously, who could like being around someone who doesn't like anything, and who doesn't like an idea unless they came up with it on their own? Refuse such people admission to Bacchus' liquors whenever you're trying to relax and enjoy life.

Belligerents

You should also steer clear of friends who are always picking fights. Temperamentally, they're no better than the last group. They get off on disagreeing and conflict and the bloody fistfights they lead to, and on war, which is the enemy of peace and harmony. These guys are better off enlisting in the army and waging awful, gung-ho wars for Mars than ruining happy, low-key parties for Bacchus with their bickering and backbiting. Their kind is always inhuman, always armed, and barbaric, lacking any redeeming qualities.

Blowhards

Add to them the Thrasos,⁷ so conceited and full of BS. Everyone hates those obnoxious guys—unruly and never shutting up. Nothing on earth can beat them in bombast or egotism. Their absurd narcissistic personality disorder has blinded them and gets in the way of their ever being able to see themselves as they really are. Drinks turn bitter when you get them with Thrasos, even if the wine sloshing in the cups is liquid nectar.

Bragging is a character flaw. It's really annoying and inevitably tiresome, every time. [These Thrasos] jeer at anyone and everyone; they're incapable of ever yielding ground. They dismiss educated people and gentlemen, and though they're unable to excel by virtue of their mind or any accomplishments in the arts—they're complete and total boors!—nevertheless, these malign critics of *real* prowess *still*

want the top spot in every situation:

- People are telling a story? They're "bards, poets!"
- They're singing? Their "voice is better than Hermogenes'!"
- Talking about fighting? Before long, your Thraso's morphing into "an invincible Achilles," and he's telling you all about battles he never actually saw.
- Critiquing works of art? *He'll* be an art critic, too.
- Dabbling in poems? *He'll* be a trained poet!

In short, no matter what comes up in conversation, your Thraso makes it a starting point to bang on endlessly. Always.

Ex-monks

With regard to those runaways who have gotten rid of their notorious cowls and deserted their monastic cells, I especially advise you to steer supremely clear of *those friends*. Their whole kind, my young novice, is dark: they can get rid of their dark vestments but not the darkness in their thoughts. They outdo a black rook's looks by the darkness of their souls; believe me, their darkness outdoes inky pitch. Their constant companions are habitual hypocrisy and the monstrosities their mendacious monastery fed them on for so long. This species

- is cunning in flattery, and
- playing the long game in deceptions,
- adept at cozening geniuses, and
- adept at cozening simpletons.

They wheedle and fawn and slither their way into every breast, not loving or helping anyone genuinely. And who could show us more meddlesome busybodies? For that reason alone, I think you must beware these monsters.

That said, I didn't mean to target *everybody* in this section of my poem, because good men, too, have fled those nests. Some have excellent educations and sharp minds, having nursed on Minerva's milk and bosom. Nevertheless, because the man you and I are looking for is a rare bird, if you can comfortably skip these guys while drinking, do. A cloister's cups reek of toxic Lerna—and that's all I'll let myself say about that in this poem.

Heretics

Along with them, do all you can to get away from blasphemers and enemies of God almighty—the spawn of Satan! They injure Christ's

body and most holy blood with obscene profanity—barbarians!⁸ Never has a greater blasphemy arisen, never has a greater crime been witnessed on planet earth, no plague has ever so afflicted mortal women and men, no plague ever *will* so harm the world as the harm that's been done to the world by sacrilegious teachers working to stop Christ from governing His kingdom. In teaching that our sacrament is nothing but a lifeless body, how many poor souls have they plunged into the darkness of hell?⁹ Therefore, run away from these ulcers, these furies, these firebrands, these plagues, if you want to save your life!

(But Catholics Are Okay)

What're my thoughts on your avoiding wine with papists or drinking wine with their cowl-clad crowd? Well, if you're downing drinks with Jews and Muslims, then what's stopping you from enjoying wine with papists? Often, I've found almost *more* friendship, candor, love, and kindness—yes, more *love*—in a given papist of a gracious bent than in the countless hypocrites around me. They're nice to people and they fill cups generously, pouring only from big bottles. Why should I care what the papist crowd believes, so long as they're keeping me full of good wine? If papists aren't blasphemous when they're drinking, why shouldn't I get drinks and have fun with them?

Gossips

Moving on, someone else who ought not drink anywhere near fast friends is someone who's full of cracks, like a Parmeno,¹⁰ and goes blabbing drinkers' politically incorrect speech. These idiot talkers can't keep anything *quiet*. The person downing drinks with you and me should be a Pythagorean: they can listen, but they should keep what they hear a secret—even go to the wall for it.¹¹

Badmouthers

Blacklist, too, those whose favorite thing is trashing other people behind their back, chewing up their good name like a dog. Your drinks should allow for frank talk but not for snotty criticism; the wine you're drinking shouldn't leave a stain on someone else. What's regarded as the surest sign of a filthy soul and a mark of poor character is this: bringing up your neighbor's warts and zits, and sullyng their honor with unworthy talk, all for no reason.

Hypocrites

Realize that, just as you think you should flee hell's dark doorway, so

too you must avoid those men whose hearts are at odds with their voices, who offer a treat in one hand while aiming a weapon with the other. I consider them smooth-talking flatterers: fork-tongued, two-faced, double-dealing foxes.

Bloviators

Blacklist, too, speakers who churn out one absurd lie after another: they kill us all with their ceaseless BS. The other person needs to be given a chance to speak, too, and real conversations are going to have to be a team effort.

Criminal Elements

Also forbidden from pounding drinks with you are snitches, fightstarters, and malicious tattletales, and if you find out any others have disgraced themselves by their vices and utterly unacceptable crimes, stay away!

On the topic of drinking buddies, I've said which to look for and which to avoid. Remember them!



Interlude #2: Self-Improvement

Next up: mold your character on the people you're excited to become friends with. You have to *want* to

- Get your life together.
- Be a person of achievements.
- Be a person of integrity.
- Say what you really think.
- Be honest and sincere.
- Keep your word.

And give other evidence of your usefulness, if you're eager to drink alcohol responsibly. It'd be a disgrace for you to want friends of recognized achievements while you're a total mess yourself.



Drinking at Social Functions; Or, Party Etiquette

Once you've cleaned up your act as I've described, make the rounds at social gatherings. Concentrate on doing just what the occasion calls for.

And trust me, what the occasion calls for *isn't* sour-faced Catos, or holier-than-thou Curiuses, or uncompromising pedants interjecting their stupid clarifications, or forbidding Numas and their fake religion.¹² The occasion doesn't tolerate people shaking with rage or sad about a funeral or depressed by anxiety or some hidden sorrow, regardless of whether they're worried about a physical wound they've covered up or it's a serious problem that's preoccupying their mind. It does call for people who are

- festive,
- polite,
- jolly,
- happy to be there,
- funny,
- easygoing, and
- not preoccupied.

GET YOUR ATTITUDE RIGHT

Therefore, you should enter a party with a relaxed smile. Don't let your face appear the least bit clouded. If some hidden worry does happen to be gnawing at you, then lay your cross down the moment you step through the door or dispel it ASAP with a drink of Lyaeus—there's no surer remedy for worries than alcohol. Once you shake it off, relax and brighten your face. Moody people are poor company for people having a good time (drunks are poor company for abstainers, and abstainers are poor company for people getting sloshed on free-flowing wine). You should model your expression on other people's facial expressions, and, as that famous law of old tells us, make sure your upset face doesn't upset a happy party. No, dispel the clouds and put on a bright, sunny face. Be a model of diplomacy in your behavior and speech; this is rule #1, and it'll serve you well in your drinking. You should be

- polite,
- easygoing,
- relaxed,
- witty,
- fun,
- deferential,

- self-deprecating, and hence
- a joy to be around

—and not because I’m telling you to act like a flatterer (a friendly gathering of straight-talkers has no interest in your playing that role). No, I’m telling you to humor the interests of the people drinking, such that whatever they’re into, *you* get into, too.

DOS AND DON'TS

Do Follow the Conversation

No other interest, no pet hobby or topic that you bring up on your own, should force people to follow your inappropriate digression if they aren’t into it. No, *you* follow *them*. Surrender your ego to your group of friends. *That’s* how you avoid antagonizing people and the fallout that comes with it.

Don’t Try to Win Arguments

Unless you want to annoy the guests at your party, you should make zero effort to one-up anyone—even if you *are* better. That’s how, as the masterful Terence puts it, young Pamphilus

evading envy, wins true friends—and praise, to boot.¹³

If a serious disagreement about politics breaks out, don’t stubbornly defend your point of view. It’s massively stupid to be pigheaded. The wise man will readily cede a point to people of good will.

Don’t Try to Impress People with Your Intelligence

That said, once the nectar’s been served, don’t bring up any serious matters for your party guests to hash out. He who’s of a mind to be wise ought to seek out the abstemious dwellings of the sages, wherein he can drone on and on in sobriety. *Bacchus* has no special interest in the words of wisdom the Stoic sect preaches in its dreary schools: no, it always pays to keep decorum in mind, as does knowing precisely what etiquette different occasions require. Any time these “sages” are bickering like idiots back and forth over drinks, I’m ready to keel over and die.

You should make a point of not bringing books to a party. If drinking is what they came for, don’t read them serious stuff. Being wise in the presence of alcohol is nothing but pointless attention-seeking. If you’re wise, then be wise about what our occasion requires, too; otherwise (*heh heh*), I’ll say you’re totally scents-less. (Those who

don't savor fine wine are savvy only about silly stuff.)¹⁴

Do Be Careful with Your Jokes

Don't be a jerk and offend somebody who's downing drinks with you. Make them laugh with jokes, but keep the jokes bland. If you want to look clever, if you want to look funny, and if you love quips, then make sure your quips aren't mean. Use inoffensive jokes in inoffensive language to show 'em your funny side. Make sure your zingers don't target anyone. Look, would you rather land a sick burn or lose an old friend? What could be more idiotic than being a buffoon? Buffoons are obnoxious; they fire off cruel and cutting wisecracks at everybody; they're shameless and cannot be embarrassed. Accordingly, never tell buffoonish jokes: all too often, they dissolve great friendships.

You see, if you do attack someone, they'll attack back and ridicule you with an equally obnoxious remark. This leads to

- anger, which leads to
- hatred, which leads to
- the loss of old friends

—and *they* were a treasure more precious to you than all the wealth of Midas.

There's lots and lots of material out there if you're looking to banter (which is more amusing *and* avoids offending people; for what shall it profit a man if he shall gain a laugh from one or two people, while the person he teased is genuinely hurt?). There are funny stories and nice songs from poets: consider *them* appropriate to share at parties. Since I don't think anyone could complain they're offended by them, make *them* your source of jokes, make *them* your basis for looking witty. Get nepenthe—the antidepressant drug—from them, and, like Helen of Troy, use it to spike the Falernian.¹⁵

Do Say Nothing Rather than Something Stupid

Those who want to banter ought to soak in the humor of ancient Greece, and if your crass Minerva¹⁶ won't get infusions of it, you'll do better to say nothing at all when you drink. Nothing exposes the inferiority of a subpar intellect faster than a tongue droning on unthinkingly. Many win a reputation for wisdom through their silence and then lose it through their stupidity.

Don't Use Foul Language

In seeking to avoid that fate, keep an eye on decorum. Don't let anything offensive out of your mouth: avoid dirty words, talk of sex,

and obscene language, all of which usually offend sensitive ears. Waiters are all around you. They're young and aren't ready for that. Why would you want to shock them deliberately?

Don't Gamble (A Disclaimer)

[I wouldn't want to be the one who tells you to gamble; gambling ruins a lot of friendships.](#) Anger—a deplorable evil—creeps in, as does a desire to win that makes me want to be able to win against my own father. I don't find drinks enjoyable anywhere gambling's going on or anywhere that dice—forever devious!—are clattering around. The ancients regarded gambling as a vice; in our times, it's become priests' main glory, interest, pursuit, exercise, hobby, and the books they've learned to study day and night.

Do Beware of People Making Insulting Gestures

[You're really going to need skill to guard against a game that turns toxic when someone flips the bird.](#) That gesture triggers grimaces that release emotions, most of which are totally inappropriate to wine (which is supposed to be relaxing). It often makes grown men lose their cool like children, and when the crimson flush takes hold of them, they react disgracefully. Not every person in the world can handle being giggled and laughed at; and if not laughter, what's the point of your game? Serious question.

Do Gamble if It Means Skipping a Turn in a Drinking Contest

[All that said, when a party's dragging on longer than it should and a fight breaks out and heats up over whose turn it is to drink next, *then go and gamble*.](#) That way, you can avoid drinking cups of unnecessary wine.¹⁷ Even if you aren't winning any jackpots, keep gambling anyway. Losing a little money is better than loading your body with bottles of wine that'll end up costing you much more.

Don't Make Jokes at Other People's Expense

[Avoid seeking material for laughter. Definitely don't make anyone into a punchline.](#) No, treat one and all with respect. Always drink wine without offending your friends; that way, you won't annoy anyone at all.

Do Keep Your Bodily Functions under Control

[Avoid](#)

- buffoonish gestures,
- farting,
- laughing like an idiot,
- belching, and
- anything genital-related.

Don't be the guy who hawks phlegm or spits out a cob, or you'll disgust and nauseate your friends.

Do Sing! Music Is Medicine for the Soul

If someone calls on you to sing—"Will you gladden our delicious wine with a song?"—then don't be difficult the way singers typically are. No, no, if there's a musical crowd around, then *sing!*, and do it willingly. Don't let gambling be your priority; after Bacchus, music alone should have pride of place at parties.

- *Music* cheers grieving hearts with song;
- *Music* has divine powers on par with Bromius:
 - *Bacchus* lifts and cheers the weeping with *nectar*,
 - *Music* lifts and cheers the depressed with *song*.
 - *He* fills the breast with *warmth*,
 - *She* stirs its *feelings*, and
 - as does *wine*,
 - so do *sounds in harmony* penetrate the chest and heart.

Sweet song brings massive praise to the man who knows how to pour a learned song from his throat. For example,

- Phemius, great Homer's bard. In singing refined songs to the obnoxious, ungrateful suitors, he alone, famed for his soothing lyrical skill, escaped cruel death at the hands of Odysseus.
- Demodocus is another, admired and honored in the land of the Phaeacians, and his king's great glory.
- Iopas, with his long hair, plays a cithara of gold while enchanting the Carthaginians and Trojan refugees.¹⁸

Do Join In When the Music Starts Up

Their praise is what you should imitate in pursuing praise yourself. Have a man versed in that art strike up Apollo's lyre; have a second sweep his thumb over those melodious strings that a hollow tortoise shell holds in place (or so it's said, anyway). Make sure a flute's there too, to sing of ancient love affairs, and let the sylvan reed-pipe play a primitive song.

You should readily display *every* impressive talent the kindly Muse

has given you. The following list can sum up my rules briefly; it's the same one the poet Ovid gave his young man in love:

- “• If you have a voice, sing.
- If your arms are limber, dance; and
- Using every gift you've got to entertain, entertain!”¹⁹

... but Don't Overdo It

That said, you also need to know when to end your song if not everyone's in the mood for music. Don't be like singers and drone on forever, deafening our thirst-cracked lips with all that bellowing. There is such a thing as enough sleep, dancing, singing, and hooking up. Don't overdo it to the point of boredom.

ON TOASTS; OR, HOW TO HANDLE PEER PRESSURE

You shall be a polite drink-proposer. Without arguing, take turns and reciprocate when someone's proposing a round of drinks. If it's too much, refuse politely and tactfully. If they're smart, they won't pressure you further at all.

That said, if they *do* insist you drink, here's what you should say:

“My fine friend, don't you know how the Homeric warlords drank wine? They'd drink as much as each one's heart desired. *Everyone* should down drinks as they please! I don't know of any of those heroes ever acting like you were and telling someone, ‘Match *that* drinking!’ I grant I'm no epic hero, but what's stopping us from following the heroic code?”

Still, to avoid offending someone by refusing their offer of wine, do have a single drink if they're pressuring you (or do like me, and knock back a hundred drinks rather than let someone get too upset). I can't stand an angry friend's grumbling, “Ah, so I see. My drinks aren't good enough for you. You tell *me* no, but you've got no problem with someone *else's* Falernian. What's wrong with my drinks? C'mon, tell me.” So that I won't go deaf from that kind of thing, I always knock one back, rarely and unwillingly turning one down. And that's why—to avoid hurt feelings—I'm frequently drinking: it's not because I'm thirsty, but so I won't be a sober killjoy. If you decide your teacher's actions are worth imitating, then surely in this respect, as in the rest, you can emulate me.

DON'T PRESSURE OTHER PEOPLE TO DRINK

That said, don't keep thrusting drinks on someone who doesn't want them, nagging them, and resist the impulse to force alcohol on

someone who's had enough. You're better off with a gentleman's humble modesty; no one should be forced to drink wine on *your* orders. Forcing someone against their will is as serious a crime as chasing them away from flowing water when they're thirsty. The sweetest glass is a drink that's downed by choice, whereas forcing hurts the drinker and the wine alike. Wine makes friends and breaks friends; being forced to drink wine isn't universally liked.



Moderation Is the Golden Rule

Drink what's enough:

- *Moderation* must forever be your guiding principle.
- Everything needs to be kept within finite limits; and
- Consent to memorize the same thing Ovid (just mentioned above) taught his young man in love:

"I'm going to give you a specific drinking limit:
Your mind and feet should both be doing their job."²⁰

THE OCCASIONAL SCREWUP IS OKAY; GETTING HAMMERED EVERY DAY
ISN'T

When you're drinking, I'm not going to hold you to a rule so strict that when you *do* eventually screw up, I'd want you executed for it. I didn't write any rules out in human blood, nothing like those draconian laws of Draco's once were. The occasional lapse shall be pardonable; what I do criticize is getting drunk every day.

OCCASIONS SUITABLE FOR OVERIMBIBING

At Festivals

As Plato informs us, sometimes we *have* to drink; there are occasions when getting drunk isn't a vice. At feasts and festivals, it's fun to overindulge in Falernian, and also at ceremonies in Your honor, sweet Iacchus: *You* gave us these heavenly gifts, so it's on Your altars that such heavenly gifts belong.

When You've Got Company (with Examples from Virgil and Homer)

When guests are with us, we should be fine enjoying wine more liberally and living life more freely.

- Dido put on an extravaganza of royal proportions when the Trojan fleet arrived at Carthage, and the queen gave her guests the signal to drink after she'd poured a libation to Jupiter herself.²¹ Before long Bitias, when told to,

greedily took a bath in the brimming gold

of the goblet, and a crowd of dignitaries followed suit. Now the golden palace is roaring with happy applause, and the atrium's echoing with the mingled voices of men: such was the power of the bubbling goblet; it's easy to imagine it passed around and around the circle, filled with unmixed wine: applause and wild cries don't break out from *moderate* draughts or a single cup or a small scyphus! You've heard the Carthaginians *and* the refugees from Troy "applauded." Do you think the Trojans had the sea on their minds at that moment?

- And how about Achilles wanting his wine stronger when he's hosting the ambassadors in his camp? He calls for

*"a bigger krater to be set up at their tables, and one cup for each guest."*²²

- Odysseus took that wine as the starting point of his conciliatory speech, and he couldn't have chosen a better gambit (and he would've prevailed on him, too, if Achilles had done a better job of drinking, but that hero's beverage wasn't big enough):

"Hail, o great-souled grandson of Aeacus, mightiest of heroes . . . !"

That was a good start, but everything after that was a disaster:

*". . . but we really don't need a fancy feast; Agamemnon's welcomed us in his camp."*²³

I mean, *seriously!* Look at the utter stupidity of this Greek ambassador, and what a *wonderful* mood he puts Achilles in! Right at the get-go, he blurts out the hated name of Agamemnon, the son of Atreus, who wasn't supposed to be mentioned anytime soon. If he'd even glanced at Quintilian's *The Orator's Education*, he surely would have started his speech something like this:

"O greatest son of Peleus, we have come here to drink. That is the purpose of our journey, and now you know it."

Meanwhile, the drinks would've created an easy opportunity to win him over, since the alcohol would've already been taming his heart.

And so it was that their ignorant “eloquence” cost those Greeks. You *idiots!* You should’ve loved Bacchus more leisurely.

When You’re Drinking with Important People

There’s a time and place when very little blame attaches to wine that gets flowing in an unusually abundant stream: the impressiveness and importance of the people drinking also offers many a good excuse. Accordingly, grab drinks frequently with the great!

ALWAYS BE MINDFUL OF DECORUM

All the same, always make a point of keeping decorum at the forefront of your mind, so that you won’t be an inept drinker and do something *wrong*. Live life, imbibing as I’ve told you to in this hurried poem of mine! *Not* drinking wine is wasting it—it’s a pour decision.²⁴

KNOW YOUR LIMITS AND THE PROPER USE OF ALCOHOL

Things have limits. That includes drinking, whose boundary is fixed. If you’re smart, you’ll never consciously cross it, and that way your reason won’t get tanked, its hull breached by a lot of wine, and turn into a man overboard, bobbing up and down amid the bottles. Either

- Don’t get drunk at all, or
- Get so drunk that it takes away your worries.

Anything between those two will hurt you. It’s for this very reason that Iacchus got the name “Liber,” because He liberates hearts that are beset with worries.

Remember My Rules When Your Wedding Day Comes

The rules I’ve told you to remember and adhere to while having fun with your friends—you must keep them all the more in mind with a fiancée, so that someday, when you’re invited to the joyous and festive wedding reception, you don’t go as some raw, rank amateur, get overcome by the wine, make a ton of obnoxious mistakes, end up as a pathetic joke to everyone, and so incur contemptuous hatred from good people which, in the end, the rest of your life won’t erase. You’ll always need to give greater thought to honor, to modesty and moderation, and to self-control, and you need to be more polite and restrained in your language, thinking of ladies and decent young women and party guests of venerable age and authority. They’re

watching your character, conduct, and choice of language, and they're taking notes. Therefore, you must especially avoid getting drunk when you're dining and drinking in polite company. I don't approve of getting drunk in any circumstances. The sober life alone is right for college kids.



Up Next: Book 2

The next book depicts the haunting portraits and problems of Drunkenness, composed by me in classical verse. *You*, binge drinker, who are constantly getting hammered, look at them as if you were looking in a mirror, and see how truly disgraceful the sight is! Once you've seen Drunkenness, you should turn and run from her for all your life, if you love the glory of true sobriety.

Part 1 of my project has run its course. Let me quench my thirst, and I'll set sail a second time.



LIBER I

Si quis in hac artem non noverit urbe bibendi,
me legat, et lecta doctior arte bibat.
Arte laboriferi tolluntur in astra colossi;
arte per undisonas navita currit aquas.
5Gnosius audaci quoque Daedalus arte volavit;
nullus erit qui non vincitur arte labor:
dulcia symposiis ne vina bibamus inepti,
et Bromius nobis arte colendus erit.
Qui nisi praecipua, sicut decet, arte colatur,
10iratum cultor sentiet esse deum.
Sicut enim est placidus, sic intractabilis idem,
cum spreto indigne numine cultus erit.
Si bibis indocte, sunt noxia vina bibenti;
sunt bona, si docte dulcia vina bibis.
15Quam sectere, igitur, certa est opus arte bibendi;
qui cupis hanc, nostro disce magisterio.
Usus opus movet hoc; vati parete perito;
non fluit hic vana falsus ab arte labor.
Hanc multo bibulae partam sudore palestra
20artem non fictam trado, iuventa, tibi.

Bacche, pater vatum, dulcissime, Bacche, deorum,
tu mea nectareo corda liquore move.
Non ego compostis hedera lauroque coronis
cingere divinum quaero poeta caput.
25Talia grandiloqui sumant sibi praemia vates
qui fera sublimi carmine bella sonant.
Pampineis potius cingas mea tempora sertis;
nam Bacchi vatem bacchica sarta decent.
Fac felix plenis spumet vindemia labris,
30implete ut magnum quaelibet uva cadum.
Proveniant largo genialia gaudia fructu,
horreat ut messes vinitor ipse suas.

Non mage Pieriis crescent mea pectora flammis
quam mihi scribenti si nova musta dabis.
35Non ego Castalias nunc postulo fervidus undas;
non sitio Aonias ambitiosus aquas.
Saepe Helicon vati facundas largiter undas
e gelidis fudit fontibus Hesiodo.
At nobis fundas, divûm sapidissime, de plus
40Francica securo fonte Falerna, pater.
A te unum calicem malo potare Lyaeae,
milia quam fontis pocula Pegasei.
Quare vitifluo mea prolue guttura rore,
si tua vis tolli carmine sacra novo.

45Haud mihi mens ardet lurconum scribere turbae,
nocte dieque tuas quae male perdit opes.
Symposium licitum concessaque vina canemus;
non erit in nostro carmine lurco bibax,
non turpis comedo, non ebrietate frequenti
50infames, penitus gens odiosa tibi.
Qui neque sunt factis neque fronte vel ore pudici,
omnem qui superant sorbitione modum.
Quîs nihil est pensi, quîs spernitur omnis honestas,
hos ego submoveo prorsus ab arte mea.
55Quos bene non homines, sed foedos iudico porcos,
et si quid porcis foedius esse potest.
His mea plectra sonant ratio quos tangit honesti,
Et quos ducit honos, et bona fama movet,
cum quibus audebunt matres potare pudicae,
60castaque non laesa virgo pudicitia.
Et ne longa brevem vincant exorsa libellum,
hinc meus a primo carcere currat equus.

Principio, triplici bibimus ratione modoque:
scilicet aut nostrae pocula sola domi,
65aut aliquos nobis sorbenda ad vina sodales
iungimus, egressi quolibet ante foras,
sive frequentantes convivium publica laeti
cum populo bibimus conveniente merum.
Saepe a cognatis, a saepe vocamur amicis,
70ad sua nos sponsus gaudia saepe vocat.
His ut inoffense mensis data vina bibamus,
haec tria materies carminis huius erit.

Iam quicumque cupis vino genialiter uti,
et vis iucunde vivere, vive domi.
75Fertur amica domus, fertur domus optima; nusquam
vivere commodius liberiusque potes,
praecipue tibi si fuerit dilecta iugali
legitime coniunx associata toro,
quae sit feminei specimenque decusque pudoris,
80et studiosa domus, et studiosa viri,
lascivo non ore procax, non rustica dura
fronte, nec agresti torva supercilio,
quae neque sit saevis iurgatrix aspera dictis,
placare iratum sed bene docta virum,
85quam castam decoret moderatae gratia formae
spernentem externi turpia furta tori,
sit non gnara doli, sit pravae nescia fraudis,
sit mulier simplex, absque stupore tamen.
Hac praesente, domi leni fer sacra Lyaeo;
90haec erit una satis dulce sodalicium.
Quos potes uxori fidae praeferre sodales?
Quos illi fratres praeposuisse velis?
Fidior est sociis, est fratre fidelior uxor,
et matris vincit candida nupta fidem.
95Rara fides sociis; semper fidissima coniunx,
cuius in audebis fundere quaeque sinum.
Sollicitis tecum consumitur anxia curis,
sustinet haec totam sedulitate domum.
Illa tibi paribus curis respondet, et aequat
100illa tui flammis cordis amore pari.
Haec studiosa tibi servit dominoque viroque;
te colit atque fovet pectore, mente, sinu.
Exhilarat tristem, pressum levat illa dolore;
semper in aequali parte laboris adest.
105Delectat casto Veneris te munere; crebro
prole nova laetum te facit esse patrem.
Cuncta domi audebis; dominaris in aedibus ipse.
Tecum, quem possis laedere, nemo bibit.
Sola meri tecum fruitur dulcedine coniunx,
110quae nunc assuevit moribus apta tuis.
Gnara tuae vitaeque tui iam gnara ferendi,
dictorum patiens et bene docta tuum.
Obsequio maiore tibi devinci amore
coniugis; haec tecum si data vina bibit,
115plusque voluptatis cyatho decerpis ab uno
quam si persiccas dolia plena foris.

Non ita se vilem tibi sentiet esse marito
caram, sed cordi funditus esse tuo,
nec molli solum te vita rebitur uti,
120sola domi vacuos dum sitit ante focos.
Ex animo gaudere potes, ridere solutus,
et quae bucca feret, dicere cuncta licet.
Sic non pauca domi potans vitabis acerba
quae tibi potanti sunt subeunda foris:
125occultos morsus, iocularia dicta, salesque
obliquos, linguae scommata multa malae,
et derisoris sannas, nasum, atque cachinnos,
scurrilique leves garrulitate iocos,
insuper indecores turpi certamine rixas,
130quae surgunt causa saepe movente levi.
Dic, age: te quotiens ad vina aliena profectum
paenituit propriam deseruisse domum,
vel cum rixantes linguis es passus amaris,
aut alia ingenuo non bene digna viro?
135His peiora domus prohibet tranquilla, bibentem
quae foris assiduo turbine saepe petunt.
Venari nemo tua dicta studebit iniquis
auribus, ut cupidis efferat illa foras,
saepe quod externe fit, ubi temere excidit ore
140prodita per iugulum vox reditura suum.



Quam dent tuta tibi iucundaque vina Penates,
carmine perstrinxit iam mea Musa brevi.
Sed quis cuncta domus comprehendere commoda possit?
In qua pax et amor regnat, et alta quies.
145In qua tranquillae floret concordia vitae,
atque maritalis copula sancta, fides.
Qua melior poterit nec tutior esse receptus,
quem tumidis ventis rara procella movet.

Cui nunc arrident soli sua tecta bibenti,
150illi, quam doceo, nil opus arte mea est.
Illi ego non statui formam normamque bibendi
condere, cui fas est vivere more suo.
Illius haud nostras veniunt sub pocula leges,
sed bibat arbitrio, cum libet, ille suo,
155atque suae utatur vitae ratione magister
et rector propria sub dicione domus.

Sed tamen hoc caveat, ne sit nimis ore procaci,
et ne, quam deceat, liberiora sonet,
aut quae offendiculo teneris sint auribus, aut quae
160proditā per famulum sint nocitura sibi.
Quot tibi sunt famuli, totidem tibi sunt inimici:
horum atque illorum fluxa perinde fides.
Invulgant audita semel simul atque relinquunt
non bene tractati tecta prioris eri.
165Talia quo possis vitare pericula cautus,
fac studeas linguae parcior esse tuae,
aut tibi servorum probitasque fidesque tuorum
pluribus indiciis sit bene nota tibi:
plurima saepe domi securo effundimus ore,
170cum natat in madido lubrica lingua loco,
quae vulgata foras, pariunt convicia, lites,
probra, simultates, iurgia, bella, minas.

His obsistendis potandum est semper honeste,
et sumenda tuae vina modesta domi.
175Aedibus in propriis si quis solet esse modestus,
ille foris facili more modestus erit.
In summa, studio fuerit dominoque patrique,
ut sit honestatis regula iusta suis.
Et foris atque domi par est meminisse decori,
180et foris atque domi sobria vita decet.
Ordinis haec nostri breviter sint dicta maritis,
quos extra strepitum vina quieta iuvant.
Quae si non leviter fuerint praecepta secuti,
haud dubie nostra doctius arte bibent.



185Perge, Lyae, mero properantem impellere vatem;
fortius hoc numquam calcar habere potes.
Et quamvis ultro curram non segniter, illud
ultro currenti, si sapis, adde tamen.
Tu facis ingenium, tu das in carmina vires,
190frigida caelesti corda calore moves,
tu melior Musis, tu maior Apolline, solum
censeo te doctis vatibus esse patrem.
Iam nova mi facies, oritur nova forma bibendi;
cernis opus nobis viribus esse novis.
195Nam prodire libet privataque linquere tecta,
et gustare foris pocula sumpta placet.



Progressum lepidos iuvat accessisse sodales;
multum laetitiae turba sodalis habet.
Esto, domus sit amica, domus sit et optima semper,
200omnibus haud tamen est uxor amica domi.

Sunt quibus est rixosa domi morosaque coniunx,
202qualis Xanthippe Socratis illa fuit.
Mitius est longe cum daemone vivere nigro,
210quam semper talem pertolerare feram.

Vivat tarda sua testudo semper in aula,
et vetula ardentem murmuret ante focum.
Dignos luce viros custodes esse domorum
dedecet, et conchis vilibus esse pares.

215Et quis continuos queat exhaurire labores?
Quis semper studiis invigilare potest?
Frangitur assidue manibus qui tenditur arcus,
et nimis intensae dissiluire fides,
et studium ingenii non est durabile longo
220tempore, si alterna saepe quiete caret.
Laxandae mentis curae sunt atque dolores;
quaerendum facili mente levamen erit.
Sunt etiam fessi refovendi corporis artus;
sunt celebranda suo tempora festa mero.
225Non rubor est festa tibi luce madere, Tibulle;
nec mihi sit festa luce madere rubor.

Adde quod humanae dediscit munia vitae
qui latet exclusis omnibus usque domi,
et sensim brutescit; iners, morosus, ineptus
230redditur, aspecta dummodo luce stupet.
Convictus hominum vitat fugitatque perosus,
hoc unum memori semper in ore tenens:
“Nemine delector, nemo est mihi gratus amicus,
cum solo est dulcis nemine vita mihi.”

235Qui cupis ergo domo mecum potare relictā
gaudentique hilarem sumere fronte diem,
atque, misanthropi despecto more Timonis,
convictus faciles et bona vina sequi:
permagni rēferre puto, culturus Iacchum
240sorbendo vino cum quibus esse velis,

quos compotores tibi, quos velis esse sodales,
tum quibus ornatos moribus esse petas.

Esse etenim haud aptos, vere liquet, omnibus omnes,

ni sint ingenio, moribus, arte pares.

245Inter dissimiles rara est concordia; crebro
surgit ab imparili turba sodalicio.

Navita cum nautis potet, cum milite miles;
cum pastore bibat pascere doctus oves,
cum medico medicus, cum rura colente, colonus;

250cum sutore colat pocula sutor iners;

cum monacho monachus, cum vespillone pytisset
pollinctor, blanda cum meretrice lupa;

lictori lictor, sed scribae scriba propinet,
lurco lurconi, mulio mulotribae;

255auriga aurigam iungat sibi; verna sodalem
quaerat servili condicione Syrum.

Denique quisque parem quaerat sumatque bibonem
qui sibi, quique suis moribus aptus erit.

Haud aegre coeunt similes parilesque sodales
260natura, studiis, moribus, arte, statu.

Ne fallare tamen delectu, providus esto:

sunt etiam similes, saepe parum similes,
nec semper similis similem delectat amicum,
dissimilis si sit moribus ille suis.

265Est aliquis studio similis, sed moribus impar;
est alius similis moribus, arte nihil.

Quo minus hic erres, fas est audire magistrum,
et placida suasus condere mente meos.

Elige iucundos sincera mente sodales,

270festivos, comes, et gravitate probos,
et pietate graves et religionis amantes,

quos non vana tenet mente superstitio,
ore verecundos, dictis, factisque modestos,

quos fovit casto docta Minerva sinu,

275quos Musae et Charites, Cyllenius, acer et arcu

Delius ornarunt munere quisque suo,

eloquii virtute, lyra, placidisque Camenis,

humanis animis, dulcibus ingeniis,

doctrina varia, candore, pudore, lepore,

280affatu facili, gratia, amore, fide;

Cecropiae doctos linguae, gnarosque Latinae,

qui nova cum priscis denique multa tenent;

quos ducit virtus, et amor contingit honesti,
quosque nec ad vitium prava cupido trahit,
285tempore iam longo quorum probitasque fidesque
pluribus indiciis saepe probata patet.

Tales te numquam cogent ad pocula, numquam

hi tibi ductores ebrietatis erunt,
sed magis impense virtutum exempla bonarum
290plura sequenda tibi sobrietate dabunt.
Haec persuasa tenens consortia prava cavebis,
dummodo te studeas insinuare bonis.
Hiscum potabis convivia laeta subintrans;
hiscum vicina sede sedere stude.
295A bona namque bonis disces; deperdere mentem
acceleras pravae cultor amicitiae.
Propterea convive bonis, testaberis olim
me bene discipulis consuluisse meis.

Talis enim semper vulgo censebere quales

300hi, quibus adiunctis pocula sumis, erunt.
A sociis de te subsurgit opinio vulgi;
fama perit pravo clara sodalicio.
Ergo graves tibi iunge viros, tibi iunge modestos,
si famam clarae nobilitatis amas.
305Sic tibi non ulla fuerit opus arte bibendi,
quam quod honestatis te moderere modo.

Quin etiam tibi si potes associare potentes

qua poteris, procures associare stude.
Hos tibi concilia suavi dulcedine morum
310et facili vitae commoditate tuae.
Obsequio et cultu, tum prompto pronus honore,
et quocumque potes nomine, iunge tibi.
Hiscum saepe bibens firmos tibi iungis amicos,
qui gravibus presso rebus adesse queunt.
315Per quos divitias, per quos nactus honores,
magnarum rerum culmina summa, petes.
Qui prodesse queunt potius sectare sodales,
unde accrescit honos utilitasque tibi.

Hunc hominum de se non turbat opinio valde,

320qui sibi cum quovis vina colenda putat.
Cuius nulla sonant vitae praeconia laudis,
sed latet obscuro vita sepulta loco,
nec spectata fides, sed abit sine pondere nomen,

nec vulgo meritis gratia nota nitet.
325 Vilis eris celebrans cum vilibus orgia Bacchi;
quo te mancipium vile iuvare potest?
Clarus eris claris, et magnus habebere magnis
conversans; ideo cautior esse stude.

Primum difficiles prae fractis moribus omnes

330 effuge: pectoribus ferrea corda gerunt;
stirpe sati humana non sunt, de tigride nati,
effera quos aluit lacte leaena suo.
Sensibus humanis vacui, quibus omnia sordent,
quorum dura tenet pectus amarities.
335 Laetitiae non sunt, non sunt genialibus apti
symposiis, tristes et sine amore feri,
qui tacito stomacho rabiosum pectus edentes,
omnibus oblatrant dicta molesta canes.
Cui nam quaeso queat, cui nil placet, ille placere?
340 et nisi quae solus fecerit acta probat?
Tales ad Bacchi latices admittere noli,
explicita quotiens vivere fronte cupis.

Rixosos etiam caveas fugiasque sodales,
ingenio primis haud meliore satos.
345 Dissona sanguineis illos discordia rixis,
bellaque tranquillae paci inimica iuvant.
Aptius hoc genus est, ut Martia castra sequatur,
et gerat audaci proelia dira manu,
laeta verecundi quam quod convivia Bacchi
350 conturbet rixis criminibusque suis;
semper inhumanum, saevis est semper in armis,
atque ferox omni commoditate caret.

His adde inflatos sublata mente Thrasones,

invisum cunctis sacrilegumque genus,
355 obstreperum atque loquax, quo nil iactantius usquam,
quo nihil in terris vanius esse potest.
Quos excaecavit ridenda philautia, qua se
obstante haud umquam noscere rite queunt.
Pocula convictu redduntur acerba Thrasonum,
360 quamvis nectareo vina liquore fluant.
Est vitiosa sui iactantia; multa molesta
ingerit, et secum taedia multa trahit.
Subsannant quosvis, ignari cedere cuiquam,
doctos despiciunt, despiciuntque bonos,
365 cumque nec ingenii virtute, nec arte politi

emineant, omni non nisi parte rudes,
censores verae tamen hi virtutis iniqui
in cunctis primas rebus habere volunt.
Fabula narratur? Sunt vates atque poetae!
370Cantatur? Superant vocibus Hermogenem!
De pugnis sermo est? Fit mox invictus Achilles,
et memorat numquam proelia visa Thraso!
Artes laudantur? Artes laudabit et ipse!
Ludis carminibus? Versificator erit!
375Denique cuiuscumque rei fit mentio, semper
hic Thraso materiam garrulitatis habet.

Praecipue infamem qui deposuere cucullam,
et profugi cellas deseruere suas,
hos ego te iubeo summe vitare sodales:
380hoc totum genus est, tiro novelle, nigrum.
Nigritiem vestis possunt deponere; mentis
nigrorem nulla cum ratione queunt.
Exsuperant furvos animi nigredine corvos;
exsuperant atram, crede, nigrore picem.
385Quos assueta diu comitatur hypocrisis, atque
quae fovit mendax monstra monastra diu.
Callida adulandi gens, prudentissima fraudis,
fallere docta catos, fallere docta rudes:
omnia blanditiis miris in pectora serpit;
390sincere nullum diligit atque colit.
Et quis peiores nobis dabit ardeliones
(nomine quo solo monstra cavenda reor)?
Hoc tamen haud omnes volui perstringere versu;
hos etiam nidos deseruere boni.
395Sunt qui Palladio nutriti lacte sinuque
doctrina praestant ingenioque valent,
sed quia rara avis est quem quaerimus, hisce bibendo
si poteris aequa mente carere, care.
Coenobii redolent vitiantem pocula Lernam;
400cetera celabo carmine pressa meo.

Hiscum blasphemos et magni numinis hostes,
Tartareas pestes, qua potes arte, fuge,
qui Christi corpus cum sanguine ter venerando
spurcidica laedunt impietate truces.
405Numquam surrexit maior blasphemia, numquam
auditum est fando maius in orbe scelus,
nulla lues adeo mortalibus obfuit unquam,
nulla adeo terris est nocitura lues,

quantum sacrilegi terris nocuere magistri,
410qui sua ne Christus regna gubernet, agunt.
Quot miseras animas nigro mersere barathro,
dum sacramentum corpus inane docent?
Ergo fuge has vomicas, furiasque, facesque, luesque,
consultum vitae si cupis esse tuae.

415Quaeris num tibi sint cum nullis vina Papistis,
cumque cuculligero vina bibenda grege?
Si cum Iudaeis, cum Turcis pocula sorbes,
quid cum Papistis sumere vina vetat?
Plus fere amicitiae, candoris, plus et amoris,
420plus reperi officii, plus et amoris ego
saepe penes quendam civili mente Papistam
quam penes innumeros ore subinde pios.
Prolixe tractant homines, et largiter implent
pocula de magnis non nisi ducta cadis.
425Cur mihi sit curae quid turba Papistica credat,
dummodo me vino repleat illa bono?
Si non blasphemi fuerint potando Papistae,
cum non cur illis vina iocosa colam?

Insuper et fidos nusquam bibat inter amicos,
430rimarum qui ceu Parmeno plenus erit,
libera pоторum qui dicta eliminat, et qui
futilis atque loquax nil reticere potest.
Nobiscum sorbere volens sit Pythagoraeus;
audiat, auditum mutus Amycla tegat.

435Adde quibus studio est alienam carpere famam,
nomen et absentum rodere more canis.
Candida probrosa careant tua pocula lingua;
quod bibis alterius sit sine labe merum:
pectoris impuri certissimus ille character,
440et pravae mentis dicitur esse nota:
vicini naevos maculasque referre libenter,
eius et illoto volvere in ore decus.

Limina quam nigri censes fugienda barathri,
tam tibi vitandos hos quoque rere viros
445quorum vox non est cum pectore consona, quorum
laeva manus panem, dextera fert lapidem.
Assentatores blandos, simul atque bilingues,
vulpinos, duplices, ambiguosque puto.

Adde locutores mendacia vana vomentes:

450immodica cunctos garrulitate necant.
Est alienae etiam pars concedenda loquelaе,
inque vicem sermo suscipiendus erit.

Nec quadruplator siccabit pocula tecum,

non vitiligator, non sycophanta malus,
455et si quos alios vitiis minimeque ferendis
criminibus turpes noveris esse, cave.
Qui tibi sectandi sint, vitandique sodales,
diximus; hos memori mente animoque tene.



Quod superest, studeas, tibi quos adiungere gestis,

460his ut persimilis moribus esse velis:
composita vita, virtutibus, integritate,
candore ingenii, simplicitate, fide,
atque ornamentis aliis probitatis honestae,
si potare cupis non sine laude merum.
465Turpe foret, si tu cuperes virtute sodales
eximios, vitiis omnibus ipse scatens.



Sic itaque instructus, convivia laeta frequenta,

totus agens id quod postulat ille locus.
Postulat ille locus taẽtricos haud fronte Catones,
470nec Curios torvo, crede, supercilio,
nec stolidae sophiae querulos rigidosque magistros,
nec ficta tristes religione Numas.
Non fert ringentes, non fert a funere maestos
ille locus, nec quos sollicitudo premit
475aut dolor occultus, seu caeco vulnere cura,
sive malum tacita quod grave mente latet.
Vult hilares, comes, iucundos atque lubentes,
urbanos, faciles, libera corda metu.

Accedas igitur convivia fronte serena,

480ostendens vultu nubila nulla tuo.
Si qua latens maestum forsā te cura remordet,
protinus in primo limine pone crucem,
aut illam sumpto quam primum pelle Lyaeo:
certior est curis nulla medela mero.

485Discussis illis renitentem exporrige frontem;
non bene cum laetis tristia corda sedent.
Non bene cum siccis sedet ebrius, nec bene siccus
cum madidis inter pocula plena sedet.
Ad vultus alios debes effingere vultum,
490et facere, id quod lex praecipit illa vetus,
ne tua symposium laetum frons turbida turbet,
sed sit depulsa nube serena tibi.
Exhibeas temet dictis factisque modestum:
haec te potantem regula prima decet.
495Sis comis, facilis, placidus, iucundus, amoenus,
obsequio et morum commoditate placens,
non quod palponis iubeam te munus obire
(non petit hanc a te candida turba vicem),
sed studiis iubeo te subservire bibentum,
500ut quaecumque placent his, placeantque tibi.

Non aliud studium, non oblectatio per te
quaesita invitos cogat iniqua sequi.
Ipse sequens illos turbae te dede sodali,
sic adversantis damna cavere potes.

505Nulli te, quamquam melior, praeponere certes,
si non convivis vis odio esse tuis.
Sic tuus invidia reperit sine, culte Terenti,
et laudem et socios Pamphilus ille pares.
Seria de rebus si disceptatio surgit,
510ipse tuae mentis non velis esse tenax.
Stultitia est ingens prae fractum pectus habere:
qui sapit, haud graviter cesserit ille bonis.

Tu tamen apposito iam vini nectare, nulla
seria convivis discutienda refer.
515Cui sapere est animus, quaerat ieiuna sophorum
tectis, ubi sit nimio sobrius ore loquax.
Bacchus non nimium quaerit sapientia verba,
quae tradit miseris Stoica secta scholis.
Est operae pretium semper meminisse decori,
520et nosse exacte quid loca quaeque decet.
Quandocumque sophi stolidi inter pocula certant,
tunc ego (me miserum!) morte perisse velim.
Symposiis nullos studeas inferre libellos:
hic ubi potandum est, seria nulla legas.
525Est praesente mero sapere ostentatio vana:
si sapis, et locus hic quae cupit, illa sape;

aut te omnem dicam semel amisisse saporem.
Prae nugis sapiunt, cui bona vina nihil.

Nulli os laede procax sorbenti pocula tecum.

530Delectare iocis; sint sine dente ioci.
Si cupis urbanus, si vis festivus haberi,
et gaudes salibus, sint sine felle sales.
Innocuo innocuos profer sermone lepores;
fac tua non ullum scommata salsa petant.
535Argutum dictum, veterem quam perdere amicum
malis? Quid scurra vanius esse potest?
Improba qui petulans dicteria iactat in omnes;
perfricta nescit fronte pudere magis.
Propterea numquam scurrilibus utere dictis:
540saepius his magnus dissociatur amor.
Nam si forte petes aliquem, petet ille vicissim,
teque pari faciet scommate ridiculum.
Hinc ira, hinc odium, hinc veteres perduntur amici,
res opibus cunctis anteferenda Midae.
545Plurima materies urbanis ludere dictis
quaerenti (quibus et gratia maior inest,
et nihil offensae; quid enim quando unus et alter
riserit, et tactus scommate corde dolet?).
Sunt lepidae historiae, sunt dulcia carmina vatum;
550haec in symposiis tum recitanda puta.
Hinc tibi sume sales, studeas hinc salsus haberi,
unde potest laesum se, puto, nemo queri.
Adde hinc depromptum, sicut Ledaea, Falerno
nepenthes, miserae pharmaca tristitiae.

825Qui volet urbanis festive ludere dictis,

Cecropio decet hunc permaduisse sale.
Hoc si non fuerit tua crassa Minerva salita,
maiori poteris laude silere bibens;
promptius haud alio stolidae vecordia mentis
830proditur, ac linguae garrulitate levi.
Pluribus est sapientiae opinio parta tacendo;
hanc amiserunt futilitate sua.

Haec dum vitâris, habita ratione decori

nil foedum dictu prodeat ore tuo:
835turpia verba, procax, obscaenaque nomina vita,
noxia quae teneris auribus esse solent.
Circumstant tenera iuvenes aetate ministri;
his offendiculo cur velis esse libens?

Auctor ludendi nolim tuus esse libenter:

840dissolvit multas ludus amicitias.

Ira subit (deforme malum) lucrique cupido;

haec facit ut cupiam vincere posse patrem.

Pocula grata mihi sunt nusquam ubi luditur, atque
semper ubi fallax tessera iacta strepit.

845Alea apud veteres habita est infamis, apud nos

una sacerdotum gloria, cura, labor,

gymnasium, studium, libri, noctesque diesque

volvere continua quos didicere manu.

Quem facit invisum derisa ciconia ludum,

850hic tibi cum primis arte cavendus erit.

Excitat hic sannas praecordia saepe moventes,

pluraque quae minime vina quieta decent.

Saepe graves peccant illo pueriliter, et se

turpiter ostendunt, quos capit inde rubor.

855Non quivis patiens est risus atque cachinni;

hic praeter risum quid, rogo, ludus habet?

Porro ubi symposium trahitur prolixius aequo,

pugnaque ab alterno surgit oborta mero,

lude, supervacui quo vites pocula vini:

860etsi nulla feres praemia, lude tamen:

praestat iacturam modici fecisse peculi,

quam tua damnosis membra gravasse cadis.

Materiam risus fugiens ludibria nullum

fac facias, quemvis sed reverenter habe.

865Semper inoffenso sunt vina bibenda sodale;

nulli tu prorsus sic odiosus eris.

Ridiculos gestus, paedores atque cachinnos

indecores, ructus, cuncta pudenda fuge.

Sucidus haud esto sputator, sive screator,

870ne fias sociis nausea foeda tuis.

Si quis et ad cantum te provocat, atque rogabit

exhilaes cantu dulcia vina tuo,

ne sis difficilis, cantorum more, rogatus,

sed cane, si praesto est musica turba, libens.

875Nec tibi sit potior ludus: post musica Bacchum

sola in symposiis debet habere locum.

Musica laetificat maerentia pectora cantu;

cum Bromio compar Musica numen habet.

Nectare lugentes Euhæan, hæc carmine maesta
880mente melancholicos excitat atque iuvat;
ille calore replet, movet hæc præcordia, et intrat
cum vino harmoniæ viscera tota sonus.
Ingentem dulci iungit sibi carmine laudem,
fundere qui doctum novit ab ore melos.
885Phemius exemplo est magni citharoedus Homeri.
Dum canit ingratis carmina culta procis,
solus hic effugit fatum crudele, manusque
Dulichias, placidæ nobilis arte lyrae.
Et, quem demirans coluit Phæacia tellus,
890Demodocus, regis gloria magna sui.
Personat aurata cithara crinitus Iopas,
demulcens Tyrios Aeneadasque vagos.

Istorum est tibi laus laudes imitanda sequenti.

Pulset Apollineam doctus ab arte lyram;
895alter dulcisonas percurrat pollice chordas,
quas cava testudo, sic modo fertur, habet.
Fistula nec desit veteres quæ dicat amores,
et rude silvestris carmen avena sonet.
Cuncta venustatis delectamenta libenter
900exhibeas, tibi quæ Musa benigna dedit.
Hæc præceptorum breviter sit summa meorum,
quam dat amatori Naso poeta suo:
“SI VOX EST, CANTA; SI MOLLIA BRACHIA, SALTA;
ET QUACUMQUE POTES DOTE PLACERE, PLACE.”

905**Ut tamen et finem noris imponere cantu**
est opus, haud omnes musica quando iuvat.
Ne, sicut faciunt cantores, ipse boatu
perpetuo obtundas arida labra siti.
Est saties somni, choreæ, cantus, et amoris;
910taedia sunt nimio nulla movenda modo.

Esto propinator comis; sine lite vicissim

ipse propinanti pocula redde vicem.
Quod nimium est, blando civiliter ore recusa;
si sapit, urgebit te magis ille nihil.
915Si tamen institerit vino, dic, “Optime, nescis
quinam Maeonidæ vina bibere duces?
Potabant, animus quantum cuiusque volebat.
Sorbeat arbitrio pocula quisque suo!
Numquam ego, quod fueris, novi, ex heroibus istis
920dicentem ‘contra talia, redde bibens!’

Magnis ut non sim virtutibus inclutus heros,
sed tamen heroum quid vetat acta sequi?”
Ne tamen offendas aliquem data vina recusans,
urgentis potius pocula sume semel,
925vel nostro exemplo, potius qui pocula centum
haurio, quam quisquam tristior esse velit.
Non possum irati mala murmura ferre sodalis,
“ut video, sordent pocula nostra tibi.
Me spreto alterius non dedignare Falernum;
930cur mea fastidis pocula? Fare, precor.”
Talibus obtundar ne vocibus, haurio semper,
invita excludens pocula rara manu.
Sic ego vitatis offensis, poto frequenter:
non quod ego sitio, sed ne miser sitiam.
935Iam si facta tui censes imitanda magistri,
his meus ut reliquis aemulus esse potes.

Tu tamen invito cyathos obtrudere noli
durius, et fessum cogere velle mero.
Te decet ingenuae contracta modestia vitae;
940nemo tuo iussu vina coacta bibat.
Aequae est grande scelus nolentem cogere, quam si
pellitur a liquida, cum sitibundus, aqua.
Sunt sponte exhausti dulcissima pocula potus;
cogens potori noxius atque mero est.
945Vino iunguntur, vino solvuntur amici;
omnibus haud aequae vina coacta placent.



Quod satis est pota; modus est retinendus ubique;
omnia finito sunt cohibenda modo,
et, quod amatorem docuit modo Naso citatus,
950illud idem memori condere mente velis:
“CERTA TIBI A NOBIS DABITUR MENSURA BIBENDI:
OFFICIUM PRAESTENT MENSQUE PEDESQUE SUUM.”

Potantem rigida non sic te lege tenebo,
ut mox peccantem plectere morte velim.
955Humano nullas conscripsi sanguine leges,
ferrea ceu quondam iura Draconis erant.
Raro contingens noxa excusabilis esto;
carpitur ebrietas quotidiana mihi.

Nonnumquam est nobis, auctore Platone, bibendum;

960est locus in quo non est vitiosa Methe.
Temporibus festis iuvat indulgere Falerno
largius, inque tuis, dulcis Iacche, sacris.
Talia tu nobis caelestia dona dedisti,
talia sunt aris dona ferenda tuis.

965Hospitibus liceat vino praesentibus uti
fusius, et vita liberiore frui.

Regifico luxu struxit convivia Dido,
tempore quo Libyam Troica classis adit,
et dedit hospitibus signum regina bibendi,
970vinum libasset cum prius ipsa Iovi.
Mox iussus Bitias pleno se proluit auro
impiger; hunc procerum turba secuta fuit.

Aurea deinde strepunt laeto palatia plausu,
et mixta resonant atria voce virum.
975Tanta fuit paterae virtus spumantis; in orbem
credibile est plenam saepius isse mero:
haustibus haud modicis nec poclo surgit ab uno
plausus, nec parvo iubila laeta scypho.

Plausisse audisti Tyrios, Troiaque profectos;
980Troas tunc memores rere fuisse maris?
Quid quod et Aeacides vinum esse meracius optat,
legatos castris cum tenet ille suis
maioresque iubet cratera reponere mensis
et convivarum pocula cuique sua?

985A vino sumpsit placandi exordia Ulysses;
haud melius potuit sumere principium
(et persuasisset, bene si potasset Achilles;
non fuit Aeacidae potio larga satis):
“Magnanime Aeacida, heroum fortissime, salve!”

990Haec bene, sed dixit cetera verba male:
“Haud equidem dapibus mensae genialis egemus;
accepit castris nos Agamemno suis.”

Stultitiam Argivi, rogo, rhetoris aspice magnam,
apte Pelidem quam paret ipse sibi.

995Invisum statim quod profert nomen Atridae,
mentio cuius erat non facienda cito.

Qui si vel leviter legisset Quintilianum,
verbis haud dubie talibus orsus erat:
“Maxime Pelida, potatum venimus ad te,
1000ut tibi sit nostrae cognita causa viae.”

Interea facilem placandi pocula causam

fecissent, pectus iam subigente mero.
Sic Danaïs indocta fuit facundia damno;
longius, o stolidi, Bacchus amandus erat.

1005 **Est locus et tempus minime damnantia vinum**
flumine quod forsan uberiore fluit;
multa quoque excusat virtus pretiumque bibentum;
quare cum magnis pocula carpe crebro.

Sed tamen ipse stude semper meminisse decori,
1010 ne, quod non deceat, potor ineptus agas.
Vive bibens, sicut properato carmine dixi,
non haurire merum, perdere, culpa, merum est.

Sunt fines rerum, certa est quoque meta bibendi;
si sapis, hanc numquam transgrediere sciens,
1015 ne ratio multo submersa vel obruta vino
fluctuet in mediis naufraga facta cadis.
Aut nulla ebrietas, aut tanta sit, ut tibi curas
eripiat: si qua est inter utrumque, nocet.
Hac ipsa Liber de causa est dictus Iacchus,
1020 maesta quod a curis libera corda facit.

Quae dixi lepidos inter servanda sodales,
haec tibi cum sponsa sunt retinenda magis,
ne quando ad taedas, genialia festa, iugales
non bene compositus tiro vocatus eas
1025 et victus vino petulanter plurima pecces,
et risus fias omnibus ipse levis,
et sic contemptum incurras odiumque bonorum,
quod tibi vix adimat denique vita sequens.
Maior honestatis ratio, atque modestia maior,
1030 et pudor hic maior semper habendus erit
estque verecundo tibi castius ore loquendum
propter matronas virgineumque decus,
propter convivas senio et gravitate verendos,
qui mores, gestus, et tua verba notant.
1035 Ergo cenanti civiliter atque bibenti
praecipue ebrietas est fugienda tibi.
Ebrietas nulla nobis ratione probatur;
sola iuventutem sobria vita decet.

Proximus illius monstrat simulacra libellus

1040et vitia, antiquo carmine scripta mihi.

Haec velut in speculo, facies turpissima quae sit

iugi lurco madens ebrietate, vide.

Quam visam fugias vita aspernatus in omni,

si laudem verae sobrietatis amas.

1045Prima mihi coepti pars est decursa laboris;

restringa faciam vela secunda siti.



BOOK 2

EXCESSIVE DRINKING, WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

Invocation of Bacchus

Come to me, Bacchus, father and planter of our joy-giving grape! Pour us Falernian with a hastening hand! Let mugs brim with the juice of Your nectar; let Franconian wines flow in a never-ending stream! *Wash* our vine-sustaining hills with a heavenly stream, and—though it's Your father's duty—deign to do it: *soak* us with Your bountiful rainstorm, Lyaeus, yes, even though the Danube *is* carrying its rushing waters into the sea! I fear my parched throat will perish from a delay in drinking and my mouth's strength will drain away and die of thirst, just as when the overpowering summer sun scorches plowlands dry and fields of grass perish in the heat.

And be not ashamed to do the job of gorgeous Ganymede! Your situation has precedents. Didn't Vulcan and Hebe frequently serve nectar and ambrosia to the gods and demigod heroes? Given that You are mightier than Vulcan and lovelier than Hebe, and if I prefer *You* as my Trojan Ganymede, then why *wouldn't* You want to be my Vulcan and Hebe, and pour me wine with a Ganymedean hand?

Hence, let alcohol fill every glass and goblet and bottle and ladle and bowl! Let our snifters brim with wine, Bacchus, if I was the first to teach a better way of enjoying Your gift, if my verses—albeit clumsy—are celebrating Your divine powers, if I am a sedulous and willing member of Your church, if my immortal words of praise are lifting the eternally indelible name of *Bacchus* to the brilliant stars above!

LITANY OF PRAISE TO BACCHUS AND HIS POWER

No god greater than You has joined the ranks of heaven!

- *You* make men rich, handsome, and genteel.
- *You* make hearts bold and *You* crush the insolent! Pentheus and the violent Lycurgus felt this—the first, for torturing Acoetes and breaking up Your secret orgies; the second, because his evil hubris resisted You, when he terrified Your nymphs on Mt. Nysus' peak, when Thetis succored You in Your fear. The savages of India felt it; so did the menacing sailors that Karpathos' waters nourish in the

sea.¹

- *You* lift the desperate and despairing up with hope, setting them on their own two feet;
- *You* lift a drooping body and fill it with energy;
- *You* energize the sluggish into action.
- *You*, Bacchus, make men—no matter how unattractive—look good to women;
- *You* relieve painful wounds, no matter how afflicted a person is.
- With *Your* dew, Iacchus, *You* refresh a mother weeping over her child's corpse, and with stronger wine *You* bring her tears to an end.
- *You* make the terrible burden of poverty tolerable, and
- *You* transform a humble hut into a gleaming mansion.
- *You*, my lord, teach us the arts; from *Your* full bottles, *You* supply the tongue-tied with eloquent words.
- *You*, my lord, by *Your* sweet gift, help us fall asleep; *Your* liquors refresh weary bodies.
- *You*, my lord, prolong the pleasing time of youth—that thrice-blessèd age—and *You* do not let the elderly be decrepit.
- *You* have the power to assign extra time to a long life: *You* have the power to halt the days speeding by.
- *You*, my lord, frequently set a group of elderly men dancing;
- *You*, my lord, even compel women bent with age to play.
- *You*, Lenaeus, create friendships; *You* create friends; and *Yours* is the warmth that melts cold hearts.
- *You* alone, my lord, can gladden the gods in high heaven, and *You* alone, my lord, can gladden women and men.
- For crying out loud, I'll be damned if *You can't* resurrect dead bodies with the juices that flow from *Your* vine!

Those whose hearts are unmoved by such miracles' benefits, and are unmoved by Bacchus' gifts, are made of iron. *My* breast isn't so dull with rigid iron that the great miracle of *You* doesn't move me!

A PRAYER FOR PROMPT SUCCOR

So, dear Father, come on! Be not slow to refill the great krater and top me off with wine to drink! "He who gives quickly, gives twice."² Thanks twice as great are owed for something bought at the trivial price of a prayer. You see how the krater stands empty, drained of Iacchus; grant me a dessert of wine from a brimming bottle; it will give me the strength to finish the rest of my work and round off these books that I've started with a proper conclusion.

Appeal to the Reader

Have a drink, my novice, and use Falernian as a memory aid to store up my words. Sober up and prick up your ears, please, so you'll see how disgraceful and depraved a pleasure drunkenness is, and how the sober life is a life of glory.³



A(n Imaginary) Painting by Apelles: The Garden of Drunkenness

Among the paintings of Apelles—those monuments of old—that learned Greece celebrates in its writings, his ingenious hand left behind a masterpiece. It surpasses both the *Venuses* he created—the one of her emerging naked from the waves of the sea, and the other for the people of Kos that he only managed to get a start on. I'll describe that picture, though its excellence outdoes my song and its precious art defeats my verses.⁴

THE SURROUNDING FIELD

Stretching far and wide is a field of green grass. In its center is a garden planted with trees, which he walled off with an encircling hedge. The garden's alive with flowers all through plowlands of well-watered soil. There's an abundant variety of springtime flowers that lovingly embroider the mellow earth in every direction. Lilies are there, soft marjoram is there; so are white privet and scarlet roses; so are beds of purple violets and crimson roses. In short, *everything's* alive with the colors of springtime. Bahrain doesn't breathe with fresh incense as impressively as this; the fragrant roses of fertile Mt. Hybla don't burst into bloom as impressively as this. The honor those two share dapples the field and the garden the same way that flower-filled pasturelands usually do at the start of spring. The garden is graced with a carefully tended vineyard, with new grapes on its fertile vines.

THE ENTRANCE AND THE EXIT OF THE GARDEN

On its right, a wide entrance is created by a large gate that's receiving people as they come in. A cramped doorway—the exit—stands on the left, where a rarely traveled pathway leads. It's overgrown with briars and brambles and prickly thorns, and fearsome thickets make it, in a word, forbidding. Because it leads through lovely greenery and delicate roses, the path on the right is heavily traveled.

THE PARTYGOERS

Along that path, people are thronging to the blooming garden in huge numbers. College kids and decrepit old men alike are racing down it. In front of its doors stand snow-white canvas tents, seats made of leaves, and beds of grass. A crowd of travelers is reclining on them and enjoying a banquet; party tables are laid out in order before them. The guests have wreathed their heads with garlands of roses, and they are smiling and drinking cups of wine.

THE PARTY OF TEMPERANCE AND GOOD TIMES

He'd added nymphs on the seats, in the beauty of youth. They look to me like they're dispensing wine from amphoras, ladling it out to the reclining guests and delighting the crowd in various ways.

The first of them, Temperance, of modest face and adornment, is the sole presider of that place. Resting on her throne, she's greeting guests as they arrive. Ushering them to their seats, second, is Good Times—Good Times, whose cheeks are beautiful, her face shining serenely, the giver of applause and happiness.

All through the soft meadow the other Graces, acting as waitresses, are catering to the guests skillfully. Because they're carrying golden vessels in their hands, it even looks like they're politely offering the people wine.

Also discernible is a nice scene of people drinking on sofas, having a good time in various ways. Some are wrestling each other on a mat made of greenery, others are throwing the discus, still others are dancing. A few seem to be talking to each other, and a few look like they're singing songs together. In fact, there are even musical instruments lying around for them to use: an oboe, cithara, pipes, lutes, lyres. In sum, fun, games, relaxation, songs, and love all dwell there, one big bundle of joy. There is every possible refinement, splendid for its down-to-earth luxury, and such that great leaders could embrace and be respected for it.

After the gift of noble Bacchus has unburdened their hearts and the banquet is done, some are saying goodbye to Temperance, their host, and they're going home with happy faces, relaxed and beaming with joy.

THE PARTY OF DRUNKENNESS

Hangover at the Entrance

Others aren't satisfied with the alcohol yet, and they're sprinting into the garden. They've snubbed their host, Temperance. In the garden's entryway stands a woman with red cheeks and bloated skin, named Hangover. With her head and both hands, she's beckoning to the ranks

to come join her, duly indicating the wide-open doors.

And so that you'll understand the lurid look of the whole garden, listen briefly to the brief poem that follows.

The Entourage of Drunkenness

Presiding in the center of the garden is a woman in royal raiment, drunk and surrounded by an entourage of women. A grassy garland's encircling her styled hair, and she's holding a phiale in her hands as if she's about to drink from it.⁵ Next to her, servants are bringing wine in phiales and kylixes for the entering crowd to drink. I think the first one's name is Dementia; judging by her outfit and the expression on her face, next comes Self-Indulgence. Third is Memory Loss, who was born on the banks of the River Lethe. The fourth is sitting on the ground, looking dazed; I think she is Depression, Sloth's daughter; she is clutching a dripping cyathus and has just about passed out. In a spot near and behind her, Drunken Behavior stands fifth; she's the companion of rage-bringing Brawl. Insanity, Fury, and their brother, Madness, occupy the last place.

The Beasts Surrounding Them

Surrounding these women are bears, calves, and Molosser dogs, and lots and lots of long-eared Arcadian horses, and sheep bleating, and goats and monkeys and wolves and cows and bristling boars, all having changed from human form into monstrous animals after drinking wine from the women's hands. They enter as humans, with human faces, and for a while after they stay like that, with human faces; upon tasting the drink, they transform into animals, and not a one of them keeps their original appearance. They instantly break out in new shapes, as if they'd downed a cup of Circe's potions.

Drunkenness in Her Glory

As I studied these details, at first I thought the queen standing in their midst was Circe, but it wasn't her. It was Drunkenness, labeled in Greek letters: *Methe*, *Queen of all Wine-Drinkers*.

The Disgusting Behavior of the Beasts

But what a disgusting jumble of different animals! What a dead giveaway of their inner lives! You see, they seem to be braying cacophonously all at once, all mixed together and their mouths stretched wide. In another spot, meanwhile, sheep are vomiting wine—a sign they're naïve drunks. A moment later, the dogs are lapping up the chunks, while the pigs are wallowing on their backs in the filth

and barfing up frightening snakes and green lizards. (I'll be damned if I'm not telling you the truth!) You would've seen the cows and calves throwing up frogs and cicadas and the goats throwing up eight-sided gemstones.⁶ The donkeys are puking up books, the bears, swords and sticks, and the wolves, cats and mice. The monkeys are jumping around shamefully, most of them wearing flower garlands. Not far away, the bears are going back and forth biting and mangling each other and the wolves keep going berserk with rage. Fury and Madness are goading them to kill each other, like enemy armies engaged in a beastly war.

The Beasts Awaken and Exit the Garden, Transformed

Off on the left, though, where you can make out the garden's exit and the rarely traveled pathway that leads through the small door, the animals' disgraceful bodies are lying in the filth and vomit, tangled up and passed out in confusion—partly from the injuries, partly wounded by the wine itself. They look like a mass of slaughtered, dead animals. Part of them are shaking off sleep, slowly getting up, and they're heading back at a quickened pace to repeat the binge. Part of them, having regained their human face, though covered with animal skin, have sobered up and are heading for the little door. Their crowd is leaving the garden on foot, though they're shaky and their steps are uncertain, and they're disfigured, missing limbs. The crowd of half-animals on its way out calls to mind the image of Centaurs that dwell in the mountains.

The Hags Enslave the Transformed Beasts

As they exit, old women are coming to meet them with nooses and handcuffs. They're grabbing and taking them prisoner, lashing the compliant ones into submission with stiff whips and bashing the resisters mercilessly with bludgeons. Of them all, none's more actively sadistic than the one in front. Her joints are weak, her face part pallid, part flushed, and, unless I'm totally mistaken, she's Fever. Edema, too, with her swollen limbs, is brutalizing many; she's a fat old woman with a sulphur-yellow complexion. Psoriasis, her body covered in scabs, is venting her fury on no few captives: the evil woman is kicking some and dragging others along by their hair. More than any other, though, one woman, clad in hundreds of rags, is scourging naked bodies with all her might. To those studying the picture, she appears to be squalid Poverty—she looks like a filthy beggar, starving and wasting away. Old Age and Death are driving a fast-flying chariot, running down young and old alike.

Many others are also dragging prisoners under their hard yoke, but

I didn't learn their names.

CONCLUSION

Such was the imagery of Apelles' vivid painting and the scene his venerable brush depicted. I've merely sketched it for you, and not with the skill it deserves, but only as best I could, since my poetry can't compete with that ingenious image. It now remains for me to discuss the meaning of those painted images in my poem. I'll be brief.



The Interpretation of the Painting

The representation you're seeing in this ancient image is one of twin lives. It's a mirror of temperate happiness and of alcoholism. The realm outside belongs to happiness, but that of alcoholism lies within: it's the vine-covered realm of the enclosed, flowery mansion.

By contrast, the pathway through the field—the really big one, leading to the garden—and the countless masses of people walking on it, symbolize that yes, *all* people do greedily pursue sloth and *are* pulled violently by their hearts and minds toward pleasure, but, nevertheless,

- The first group is observing a limit and going home after enjoying wine moderately, keeping its reason intact.
- The other group is ignoring the limited occasion for their enjoyment, and hence looking to partake in binges inside the enclosure on a daily basis. The drunks binge until you see them completely lose their reason and degenerate into stupid livestock. They don't stop at a reasonable point; they don't quit until a truly painful illness forces them to, or else poverty, at long last, drives them away destitute and casts them out, half-animals, to starve.

The True Face of Drunkenness

This is Drunkenness, and *those* are the gifts with which she repays her worshippers—gifts you wouldn't give your worst enemy. Drunkenness is an insane evil, a delicious poison, sugar-coated destruction, saccharine sorrow. Drunkenness is an ugly failing and a disgraceful pleasure. Run from her! She's a sickness that afflicts your mind and body.

Nowadays young and old are everywhere worshipping at her altar

—madmen!—having run Sobriety far out of town. Believe me, no danger is more clear or present than this; it's the fastest way to ruin your body and your mind. No matter how powerful they may be, don't let anyone impress and induce you to follow their lead down the destructive path.

Excessive Drinking in Professional Life

No other vice has so gotten a grip on the courts of the mighty—even though courts nowadays abound in every vice! At times the courtly life is one of perpetual drunkenness, on par with the drunkenness that captures citadels, and at times a treasurer, knight, mayor, muleteer, scribe, or cook who shows up for work sober is an unwelcome sight to that bloated court. Everywhere you look, drunks are reigning, swinging their thyrsuses; leaders are dripping with constant drunkenness.⁷ If you can match an elephant's drinking, my good novice, as a courtier you'll win excellent rewards from the court. Knights nowadays have no enthusiasm for any other hobby; they all want to get famous for a lot of alcohol. Men whose hearts and arms were once undaunted by war, men who celebrated the prowess and achievements of Hector's hand, are now defecting to the soft camp of ladylike Lyaeus; they're scorning Mars in slothful pursuit of drinks: they're swapping shields for ladles, spears for thyrsuses, and instead of helmets, they're binding their hair with garlands.

Bingeing Is the Religion of the Masses—and the Clergy

Good grief, is it any other madness making our country so stupid nowadays? Drunkenness reigns supreme in every city! It was once the case that the Spartans put their slaves on display, drunk, at a festival for their children to observe; they wanted kids to learn to abominate this vice at an early age by seeing its disgraceful impact on behavior.⁸ Nowadays, fathers themselves are following the slaves' example, and they're their children's leaders in drunkenness.

But what else do most people want *except* drunken binges? Most people are *addicted* to wine and love drinking till they get drunk. Those abstemious monks that most people regard as sober and sparkling models of the frugal life, not to mention pious? who preach nothing but holy sobriety? whose tongues say "thirst" while their tables say, "more wine"? *That* crowd's partying nonstop; they're addicted to perpetually fattening themselves up, and because they live

in self-indulgence, they work at being drunk all the time. In the final analysis, if you look at their lives in detail, then that's really all that sanctimonious choir is after:

- hookers,
- pleasure,
- drinks at fine dinners,
- treats,
- luxury,
- sabbaths,
- delicacies,
- time off,
- dice,
- obscene binges,
- taverns,
- a free pass for their crimes, and
- a life devoid of work.

And with their shaved heads, sects, and fancy cowls, they've filled every damn corner of the earth!

Excessive Drinking Has Become a Masculine Virtue

Drunkenness is, to put it simply, spreading across the globe: the world is everywhere full of men drinking too much! This is that well-worn highway everyone's dying to keep traveling.⁹ The frugal life is out of fashion; everyone's in the grip of a monstrous addiction to alcohol:

- Nowadays, *getting hammered* is regarded as the greatest virtue—no one will believe that the man criticizing it is *sober* when he's speaking! It's how everyone seeks fame and glory; it's how everyone seeks to make their name, their reputation, become influential, make an impact.
- Nowadays, no one's good or considered tough if they can't waste a ton of wine by downing it. You're a loser if your strength fails in the face of drinks; if you don't drain cup after cup after cup dry, you're a loser.

For all these reasons, anyone who looks to that crowd is led astray by their terrible example; and like the companions of Odysseus, they won't quit the lotus once they've tasted its sweet medicine. There's no way the seductive Sirens would follow your example, Odysseus, if you want to jump ship and go swimming in wine.¹⁰

The Chaos That Excessive Drinking Brings

Do me a favor, my fine young man, and take a hard look at bad behavior. Set before your eyes all the disgraceful sins that drunks commit when they've lost their reason; do it and you'll see the sight is as disgraceful and chaotic as can be. You'll swear Circe's poisons have turned humans into monstrous, savage animals. The sight of a drinking party will force you to howl in protest and vent your emotions in a primal scream:

“Get out of my way, you degenerates, you bingers! Out of my way, you pigs! Get out of my way, you revolting mess of thyrsus-swinging weirdos! Are you alcoholics living any better than a bunch of cattle?

Serious question: What guilt or madness is it that's motivating your hearts? This isn't 'having fun,' you drunks, it's a mental illness! This isn't 'drinking' wine, it's *wasting* it! Those who enjoy your thoroughly shameful lifestyle, who think solid virtue is just a meaningless phrase, and who disparage claims to a better reputation—*they're* the people joining your herd's shameful binges!”

Drunks Are Worse than Animals; They Abuse God's Gifts

One man's shed his human form when he decides to live that kind of life; another's lost his senses. No brute, no beast drinks like that, because every animal has a natural check on its drinking. Ergo, is man—who's more disgusting to begin with than any brute!—alone unable to moderate his drinking? Man!—who God fashioned in His own image, and who He adorned with the marvelous gift of a soul—*man* ought to be ashamed of himself: the filthy animal, his disgraceful throat outdoes all the beasts, outdoes *everything* that has the breath of life.

This isn't why that famous planter of our lovely vine brought the world His pleasing gift of gentling wine:¹¹

- He commands us not to rashly abuse His wonders when we're given wine to quench our thirst.
- He doesn't prohibit the responsible use of enjoying nectar, but
- He does teach us not to declare war on conviviality.
- He doesn't tolerate those who are getting hammered constantly; *habitual* drunkenness is a sin.

But our Father also doesn't go angrily running for His weapons every time you drink more thirstily than you ought to.

IT IS OKAY TO GET HAMMERED EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE

Indeed, when you're prisoner to Bacchus' sweetness, it's possible for the sneaky wine to play tricks on your mind. You accidentally screwed up? It mitigates the fault: habitual screwups deserve censure, but the occasional one doesn't. Persistent lapses do merit a rebuke and punishment; habitual drunkenness does have to be punished.

PARTY HEARTY, NOT HARDY

Party hearty! Be happy as you're serving kraters to your friends and full cups to your guests, and do relax your breast with pleasant wine when it's aflutter and you're preoccupied with serious concerns—provided you don't go over the limit in your drinking. You see, *everything* in this world has to stay in its bounds or else risk its reason getting tanked, its hull breached by a lot of wine, and turning into a man overboard, bobbing up and down amid the bottles.

GET BUZZED, NOT HAMMERED LIKE MOST PEOPLE TODAY

Those are basically the kind of parties my countrymen are throwing nowadays, wherein Drunkenness sits supreme upon the peak. Nobody—*nobody*—is worshipping Bacchus' cups there in the *appropriate* fashion, with restraint or moderation. Take a random look at the guests that a friend invites over to a party and you'll realize I'm telling you the truth. Nobody puts their worries aside, just gets relaxed by the nectar, and looks to forget their problems with light banter. Nobody finds it in themselves to honor modest Temperance; nobody has any respect for sobriety. In all the world, it's virtually impossible nowadays to glimpse someone who *isn't* sprinting into the garden without stopping!¹²

German Drinking Habits Are Appalling

FRAT CULTURE

And just behold the fine parties thrown here in our own country, my dear reader; you don't need to look for examples from far away! At our parties, the host's chief objective is to send his guests home hammered; that's the goal he targets with all his might.

From the get-go they're pouring Lyaeus and playing competitive drinking games—first one glass, soon a second, then a third. Cups are drained dry, another round's poured; the drinking's so loud that it's

shaking the walls. Out come two different kraters of Falernian, one old and one young. Guy #1 challenges you to the old, guy #2 to the young. Across the room, red wine is arriving in clear glass for anyone around to drink. And who even counts the exotic and artificial wines—drinks that only *true* gluttony gulps down? And now being added to the wine are beer chasers (an idea dreamed up, I assume, when the gods were angry!). Before long, the sideboards are dripping with wine, the benches are taking a bath, and the soaked floor is drinking in a huge amount of wine. Rivers upon rivers are pouring down the tables; on more than one occasion, I'd have sworn the bottles were swimming.

That's how great the excess is; *that's* how great the waste of wine is; *that's* how many full cups are drowning and overflowing with alcohol. Nobody's upset at this outrageous sight; they're saying "Here, here! Good ol' German *hermanos* are partying here!"¹³

FILTHY LANGUAGE

But once the savage wine's conquered their hearts and their slippery tongues are slurring around their drunken lairs, then please!—what filth, what *obscenities* that drunken mob comes out with, once they're scrubbed of their inhibitions! Now their language has no limits or respect for the dinner table, now no consideration at all for decency. Now there's no sparing children's tender ears; words that shock traditional sensibilities are uttered. Out come

- pornographic stories told in obscene language,
- tales of making out,
- disgraceful hookups, and
- sex.

When guys are drunk, they

- brag about their hard-as-wood erections,
- spill the beans about raunchy sexual bouts,
- sing lewd and funny songs, and

by the end, the table's spewing out nothing but wine-venom.

And *there*—see?—are your pigs full of snakes and lizards: they're spewing snake venom from their mouths.¹⁴ Their venom's more poisonous than that of

- a real-live viper,
- a salamander,
- a snake,
- an adder,

- a toad,
- a lizard, or
- a dragon.

The face of a death-dealing basilisk isn't that noxious! Ghastly aconites aren't that harmful! I don't imagine the asp's narcosis-inducing powers are that potent, and the virulence of the disgusting newt can't match the venom of their outrageous table talk or the harm their scandalous tongues cause. The average person's eager to come across as sophisticated by speaking politely, but every guy in *this* setting wants to outdo another in dirty talk; and as before with the alcohol, *now* their obscene mouths are vying to utter disreputable words. It's disgraceful.

UNBRIDLED BLABBING

[What's more, countless boozehounds give up secrets they'd previously kept to themselves.](#) They drop the pretense from matters they'd been concealing and talk about them in public, such that their own alcohol-addled tongues wind up cheating on them. And there's also the problem that a naughty word often slips out of a wino's unbridled mouth that will surely boomerang back and slit his throat. Though it's a cliché, the proverb everyone's always quoting is true: *wine without moderation has no steering wheel.*¹⁵

Believe me, the man who surpasses a reasonable amount of wine is no longer the master of his mind or mouth: the secrets he'd kept silently locked up in his heart while sober are the very things he and his stupid mouth blab to one and all when he gets drunk. You see, the addled tongue discloses what the sober heart's been hiding, and it makes public everything that had been buried away. A disgrace on its own, it also reveals to all the sores it'd previously dissembled and concealed, so that these guys wind up betrayed and made fools of by their own evidence. And that's why (and it's shameful!) they're vomiting up mice.¹⁶

POINTLESS PONTIFICATING

[There are some who—provided they're drunk—like to hold forth on the Bible.](#) It's hilarious. They scrutinize every theological mystery:

- How faith nourishes, helps, and benefits believers,
- What the Bible provides,
- What Christ provides,
- What grace provides,
- What man can achieve of his own free will in the face of biblical commandments,

- Whom God has marked out for eternal life, and
- Whom dire punishment awaits in the fires of hell.

It's on these very points, though, that disagreement breaks out among the crowds of people drinking too much; and once it starts, it leads to a huge fight every time the question of religion comes up, since nobody will concede a defeat of his own ingenuity. They aggressively insist that they can learn *everything* about the divine law, no matter how recondite, like the back of their hand. So it is that the gluttons prostitute the mysteries of Christ, which should be reserved for sober meditation.

... AND IT'S ALL HYPOCRISY

My fellow drinkers¹⁷—you filthy animals!—all your wrangling has often made me chuckle! You see, while you wastrels are busy arguing in your silly fight whether there's still any point to doing good works, too, I notice you're not actually *doing* anything praiseworthy, not anything that'd be a work of pure goodness. And (if you'll forgive my saying so) because you basically trust your friends while the refectory's gulping down its sad little glasses of wine, you so readily accept each of you having one drink, while your neighbor's guzzling ten!

Your whole fight hinges on this one issue, that *one ought not weaken the flesh through a compulsory fast*. Drunks don't affirm these arguments with lots and lots of words, they prove them better by their actions. They never do fast when they're ordered to and they aren't choosing to mortify their flesh by going on an empty stomach. No, no: addicted to wine and nonstop bingeing, they're always filling their slothful stomachs by pigging out. And what really amazes a lot of people is that they aren't suffering in the slightest from hunger or thirst. Nevertheless, the *less* thirst troubles these mollicoddles, the *more* they're always drinking up, like rainbows!¹⁸ I think they're those bottomless dolia that Danaus' fifty doomed daughters keep pouring their never-ending waters into: you see, the more they dump alcohol down their hollow throats, the more they're hankering for drinks; such are the filthy swine of the church of Epicurus that huge amounts of wine turn men of the cloth into. Who'd be surprised, then, that in our painting the uneducated jackasses are vomiting up books they never learned?¹⁹

Meanwhile, the opportunities for easy living are growing—and so is the wrath of God, which only a fool would scorn. No alcoholic bothers looking for the Lord of the heavens; none are afraid of God's great powers when He's angry. In that state, who can remember the judgment that awaits? Who can remember their death? For drunks,

God and heaven are a myth, Satan and his minions are a myth, and the pit of hell is a myth. Alcoholics are equally unmoved by the harsh and threatening voice of St. Paul, which denies the kingdom of God to drunks.²⁰

The Sodden Life in All Its Variety

Who, though, *could* describe how disgracefully people behave when big bottles of wine warm them up? I could sooner list

- all the wonders of the world, or
- all the different animals the land of Africa sustains, or
- all the shores the sea's crashing waves break upon in Ionia, where the cruel North Wind blasts and churns the sea's expanse, or
- all the conch shells born in the Red Sea, or
- all the fragrant roses blooming in Sicilian Hybla!

I could sooner tot up all the detestable sins of the papacy, which not even a new *Iliad* could contain if someone were to write one, since in perverting every word our Lord Christ uttered, the Pope has conned all the world with his laws! I could sooner tot up the tricks and wiles that impostor's exploited as he's gone about stealing and amassing all the wealth on planet earth, and all the many souls that sanctimonious "father," the "bishop of Rome," and those bulls of his have plunged into hell!

THE TYPES

When people are soaked in wine,

- one starts crying, and
- another can't stop laughing.
- One's bragging about his money,
- another's banging on about his wife's beauty and their kids back home, while
- a third's turning into a beggar and buffoon: even though he's loaded, he's moaning and groaning about the bills and how poor he is.
- When he's drinking, the soldier's tough as hell and ready to fight; sober, he's tucking tail and running off the moment he spies an enemy up close.
- For a great many people, wisdom grows after a few glasses of wine, so that the guy who was Midas a minute ago is suddenly becoming a Solon.

- This guy's raving,
- that guy's shouting;
- one's shitting his pants;
- the other's chugging.
- The guy over there's barfing up everything he's taken in. It's disgusting. But as soon as he's done, he's hurrying to fill his upset stomach right back up, and before long he's even telling the waitstaff, "*Pour me another!*"

Often, it's even the case (ugh!) that these animals will swallow their barf the same way dogs pick out bits of food from what they've regurgitated.²¹ Other times, transformed by drunkenness into heroes, they'll do a shot of something raw and gross that would nauseate a normal person: glassware, a carafe—even songbirds chirping in their cages aren't safe from their chomp.

- A guy over there's telling how the Cynics dance with their genitals exposed; without hesitating, a second guy's acting out something even worse.
- A guy over here's belching—it's disgusting—while a guy over there's totally passed out, snoring and blanketed in funk and vomit.
- A fifth guy's getting into an argument and shouting abusively, breaking and smashing cups on the sodden floor.

A number of them, missing clothes and covered in mud, are planning to crawl back home late at night. Even more are getting carried off to their cribs, like lead-filled suitcases, while outside the door, a guy's transformed into an artless lover, screeching out a song. Believe me, you'd say that's how packs of ravening wolves howl when hunger drives them to it.

That is the disgraceful comedy of the drunken life. You see its stage packed with heroes everywhere. It remains for me to bring it closure with a final act, and thus round off the show in all its parts.

CHARACTERS IN THE COMEDY OF THE DRUNKEN LIFE

In this comedy, nobody accepts the role of an extra; no, every random actor's craving stardom. Here, leaders have no problem wearing the mask of the vile servant Dromo and great princes aren't ashamed to be clowns. And what should average people do when their leaders are drinking en masse? The rest of the body takes its direction from the head.

And though none who still have the ability want to exit a stage like that unless it's to claps and cheers, still, nobody cares about showing the scene proper respect; none of the drunks are eager to please the

audience. They frequently offer embarrassing shows for their betters, and they typically make children laugh, such as (for example) when

- A crowd of them goes staggering down the middle of a street, tottering under too much alcohol, or
- They're fighting in their nighttime binges and making a scene for the whole town to gossip about breathlessly in the morning, or
- A couple of drunks are bragging about their achievements in loud and pompous voices:

GUY #1 "I drank sooo much last night!"

GUY #2 "I outdrank x other dudes and made them pass out—singlehandedly!"

GUY #1 "I've been up drinking x nights in a row, and the alcohol's been wetting my lips nonstop!"

GUY #2 (*laughing*) "I swear, my head's been out of whack for days and days now!"

GUY #1 "x times I've gotten so blitzed I accidentally got left behind and snored the night away in a filthy pigsty—literally!"

There's a kind of guy who always goes around bragging, "*I outdrank my friend! I outdrank everybody in the house!*" It's impossible to hear any *other* kind of triumph from a drunk! They carry around trophies awarded FOR ACHIEVEMENTS IN POUNDING ALCOHOL.

Furthermore, what does all this embarrassing boasting really signal—if we want to be honest about it—beyond the fact that once they've lost their capacity to think clearly, *all* drunks degenerate into a herd of stupid cattle? Nobody who's actually sane would expect to win an honorable prize from a disgraceful situation. I also don't believe anyone but a lowlife idiot prides himself on disgraceful behavior. That's disgraceful.

In Sum: The Ugliness of Drunkenness

Is there anything more disgusting or disgraceful than drunkenness? It makes every one of us forget who we truly are. Drunkenness is the mother of effrontery; she forces people to forget their self-respect and run straight for every sin that goes against their character. No matter who they are, she abolishes the self-control of all who are masters of themselves. She casts them down and renders them so weak and powerless, my dear reader, that their staggering feet, minds, and tongues can no longer do their job.²²

Wine uncontrolled swamps real wisdom. Too much alcohol

destroys willpower. Without art, Bacchus gets accompanied by insane maenads, and *those* drunken monsters are nothing but binge drinkers—believe it. Bacchus erases all the distinctions between things; He doesn't permit a human being to be a human being under any circumstances.



And Yet Bro Culture Persists

Nevertheless, though, He is the hunting ground for fame and glory. Drunks *are* gripped with a burning ambition to make their name from Him. They think being hailed as “an invincible drinker” is higher praise than being hailed as “Hector’s equal in exploits.” *This* accomplishment is what everyone’s in a heated race to get famous for, and *this* is the fame they enjoy snatching from others and hoisting high. But,

- if great repute does come from a blackened reputation,
- if sterling fame does come from wicked behavior,
- if the infamy we run from really is the mother of eternal praise, and
- if disgraceful binges do bestow immortal respect,

then, my sweet Iacchus, who *wouldn't* expect your infamous drunks to win it and live on for all time?

But glory doesn't result from fame for infamy. Glory doesn't come from disgraceful situations. The path to greatness is unpaved, narrow, and really steep; the way is choked and rife with painful thorn thickets, but it's where public recognition and fame are won by those who push through major setbacks in their love of praise. Greatness is, greatness must be gotten not by wine but by sweat; *achievement* makes the glory of respect grow.

Seriously, you drink-addled guys: what *are* the public recognitions of your “achievement”? How big a part of your good reputation is it if your embarrassing and crazy quest to get crowned for drinking prowess—a quest that sane men criticize and revile—gets praised? Oh, sure, right (/sarc): you get “a famous and great name” by being a flask and always holding your liquor, or because no wine-drinker can fairly compete against your bottomless throat. That'd be like winning against a whirlpool, bottomless Charybdis, or trying to outdrink Iris in a thirst-competition!

It is for this very vice that Achilles abuses Agamemnon in furious

and toxic language and a flush of heat.²³ If being an obnoxious drunk were really a sign of greatness, then in such an impressive leader, it obviously should've been celebrated.

Drinking “Prowess”: What *Really* Happens

[When you get drunk,] you shed your human senses. You turn into a wild animal and act like a total disgrace. The upshot is that hardly anybody likes you.

In a pack of winos or amen corner of alcoholics, the pride of place, the starring role, and the greatest reputation belong to the guy who's known to every brothel keeper, hooker, drunk, bartender, clown, masseuse, cook, gambler, buffoon, procurer, pander, parasite, freeloader, servant, to the filthy bordellos and their clients, as well as every stripper, barber, flunkie, and every other sort of self-indulgent layabout.

Oh, but you reap *truly* illustrious praise and spoils when the gang of bad people you're with praises your *throat* (/sarc)! The funny thing, my friend, is that the whole time you're trying to impress them, people are calling you a notorious waste and a loser.

Besides Killing Your Reputation, You'll Be Killing Yourself

The whole time you're hanging out with these people, too, you're thinking life is cheap and pointless; you're throwing it away like a rotten apple, and you're doing terrible things to your body. You're going to *die* soon, you alcoholic, and it's going to be quick! It's an absolute disgrace. You see, you loser, in the process of lapping up more wine than you should, you're becoming a heartless murderer—of yourself. I guarantee it.

The sky suffocates plowlands with immoderate rain, but when rainfall is moderate, it nourishes parched fields. Wine is detrimental when consumed in excess but beneficial if enjoyed in moderation. Intelligent people love the latter; madmen, the former.

Signs and Symptoms of Alcoholism

The Sybaritic lifestyle accelerates various problems. It's plagued by illnesses and sufferings of many kinds.

When enervated by wine, the limbs lose their supple vigor and the whole body becomes afflicted with terrible changes. It leads to

- the beginning of a trembling and dire bobbing of the head;
- a notorious pallor that lingers on one's face;
- trembling hands and fingers twisted back in stiffness, when horrific chiraagra fetters their pliant joints;
- the muscles often growing sluggish, drooping, and losing sensation. Gout then ties the feet in knots and makes them unreliable;
- dripping, bleary eyes that are perpetually red;
- the appearance of acute pains in the stomach (because it's been poisoned);
- a shrieking tinnitus that's heard in both ears, like raucous cicadas buzzing in bramble bushes;
- a thick swarm of all kinds of fevers, too:
 - psora,
 - scabies, and
 - awful hydrops;
- many a sudden death, a friendless old age, and corpses found alone in bed the next morning;
- fever dreams that haunt the night;
- restless sleep plagued by nightmares;
- the famously horrendous stinking breath of the mouth (it's rare for a sewer line to smell that bad).

Hence, finally, the entire body is on the brink of being poisoned. Next comes death from multiple causes.

If you don't have these problems in the bloom of your youth, you'll have to cope with even more serious ones in your old age—that is, if rampaging Drunkenness and her brimming bottles don't first plunge you into a bitter and premature death. College years spent boozing are inevitably followed by an illness-plagued old age—*after* in-between years beset by countless problems. This stupid, crazy behavior *always* comes with a penalty: the wages of immoderate self-indulgence is disease.

And *that*, at long last, is the meaning of the throng intercepting people as they leave that lifestyle too late: it's the hags, waiting for alcoholics and hardcore partyers!²⁴ *That* is the cost, we can see, of changing your mind from what typically leads to madness, to fury,²⁵ to so much damage to your miserable life, and to losses that even Apollo's hand cannot heal.

Later, after you've poisoned your body with too much Iacchus and your intellectual endowments have dwindled away, a total memory loss will also overwhelm you. Tons of wine kills off the part of

alcoholics' minds that remembers things, the same as the Lethaeon waves of the River Styx wipe a prior life from memory.

Famous Examples of Excess Drinking

Although I'll say nothing about the conflicts, arguing, carrying-on, and bloody fistfights that multiply under the leadership of Drunkenness—it's unnecessary to call additional witnesses when a situation is perfectly clear—I do want to mention a few of the many things I could say.

And why bother looking for examples from faraway lands? Come on, say it: What was it that ruined the peasants not long ago? Their drunken insurrection destroyed villas and plowlands with fire, madness, hands, blood, murder, and death.²⁶

- It was only drinks of Campanian indulgence that made the unbeatable Hannibal beatable and handed him over to the leader of Latium's forces.²⁷
- Alexander the Great stained the dinner table with the blood of his friend, Cleitus, while he was maddened with wine.
- What crimes caused the emperor Vitellius to fall from power and get dragged off? Appetite, bloodshed, whore chasing—and alcohol.
- An identical lifestyle snuffed out the evil Nero: he'd made himself a devotee of Sardanapalus.

Why mention other leaders driven from their thrones and power for the venerable vice of drunkenness? Examine the history books of Rome, examine our own, if you want to know such things more exactly. If the tale told by ancient bards holds any truth, then

- Even the Lapiths succumbed to excess alcohol.
- If he hadn't drunk from Odysseus' wineskins, Polyphemus would've kept his eye.
- Judith killed Holofernes when he was passed out drunk (the Holy Bible tells us so).
- Drunkenness, which brings every nefarious sin along in its train, is the reason Sodom and Gomorrah lie in ruins.

In our own time, how many bright and promising college kids are dooming themselves by the same vice of drunkenness?

Abusing Alcohol Will Bankrupt You

Once she's drained your body of all its strength, she drains your wallet, too; Drunkenness crushes Hercules' record for most property owned. Drunkenness would devour the wealth of Croesus and Crassus. She's the reason trust funds and family estates wind up wrecked.

Drunkenness' constant companion is Destitution, who goes around in rags, and Destitution's companion is the hellish Laverna: once you're left naked, she'll force you to do evil things and tempt you to get money through immoral practices. Through immoral practices, you'll earn a disgraceful death—and *that*, at long last, will be the end of drunkenness.²⁸

You see, an empty stomach always wants to gorge on its favorite things, always wants a holiday. The stomach loves vacations. It wants drinks with a full-course dinner. It craves dainties, luxuries, the best of everything. Soon, though, unless you have the riches of a Croesus or the wealth of Crassus, you won't be able to take vacations and relax. Sluggards have no wealth, and if energy *does* produce any riches, then idle sloth squanders them.

Addiction Begins with Habituation

Nevertheless, the hankering to drink grows pretty strong from increasingly constant habituation. You can never quit it problem-free; you can never say goodbye once you've had a taste, my rookie. Trust me, it's not a good idea for young palates to taste this gateway drug to evil pleasures, because a single taste makes it hard to give it up. It's a bad idea to get between a dog and its bone: it was hard for Odysseus to tear his companions away from the lotus, and they'd only barely tasted it with the tips of their tongues. The lotus is sweet poison, a seductive invitation to pleasure. No one can give it up once they've had a taste.

Addiction Leads You to Neglect Your Wife and Children

In the meantime, there'll be no one to look out for the needs of your home, kids, and wife. While you're off drinking, you saturated sponge, pounding drink after drink after drink and having an awesome time, she's crying miserably in your abandoned living room, sitting there naked and braving hunger because the cupboard's empty. Or maybe your weeping wife's turning tricks (since Destitution's forcing her to) and putting her beauty to work. And it may well be that you're cheating on her, too, smoldering with feelings for another, since

shameful libido has always been Bacchus' constant companion. By your actions, you're making your starving wife violate the bond of monogamy the two of you forged in holy faith; otherwise, she's out scrapping with her fists for a little something to eat, and having fought for her dinner, she's heading back to her joyless bed.



Anticipating the Objections of a Drunkenness-Lover

At this point, my intoxicated crowd, I'm being shouted down by a scowling schoolteacher who sang your praises.²⁹ He's frowning because he's hearing me criticize the very points he praised, saying:

"This is the reward my rhapsody earned? I praised Drunkenness; you're refuting her? You're not impressed with all the centuries' worth of examples I present in opposition? All the cultures that are fond of drink haven't changed your mind? You aren't convinced of the enormous benefits of alcohol?"

And yet I pretty much refuted this guy's nonsense already when I proved how dangerous lots of drinks are. Nevertheless, since he sings the praises of winos beginning in ancient times—as if venerable time itself ennobled vice!—then by that way of thinking, he can sing the praises of

- shameful adulterers
- madams
- hookers
- any random thief at all.

On that basis, he can praise *any* wrongdoing you want:

- betrayal
- cheating
- robbery
- perjury
- murder
- illicit sex
- adultery
- poisoning

The fact is, you see, that “venerable” antiquity is *teeming* with these vices, not just getting drunk or intoxicated. My dear reader, a vice is

no less a vice than the vices you see around you today just because it was done many years ago. Popularity doesn't mitigate the vice of drunkenness, nor do the examples in the Bible (Lot getting tricked; the patriarch Noah overindulging). You see, a drunken person who goes astray, even if they're going along with the crowd or the saints, is merely compounding an error they ought to have avoided. The number of people doing wrong is no excuse for wrongdoing, nor does the fact that a vice is popular atone for it.

"Drunkenness is good for relieving anxiety," he says. "Drunkenness removes pain from the soul."

I readily agree. While the mind is blitzed on wine, it *doesn't* feel any of the wounds from its worries, drunk as it is. But as soon as a man's digested his unrestrained drinks and as soon as he's slept the alcohol off and sobered up, then his worries—bigger, and thousands of them—instantly race back and sink their sharp teeth into his breast: undoubtedly because he has to carry around a wallet whose money he's squandered and because he can't spend *all* his time at his habitual boozing, so a creditor's harassing him, his kid is hungry, his wife is hungry, the baker's demanding payment, the butcher's demanding payment. You think he has to *drink* constantly to get away from his worries? That's just being spectacularly stupid about what you're saying.

(/sarc) Lenaeus *does* make outstanding friends!—that is, friends who stick around as long as the cups are full of alcohol. As the ancient proverb has it, "while the pot boils, friendship lasts."³⁰

Look, my good man, it's by *achievement*, not wine, that people win friends whose loyalty need never be feared.³¹ The loyalty of a drunk is shifty; an alcoholic's friendship is invariably made of glass. You'll see; trust me—I'm an expert.

Such was the mishmash of our schoolteacher's book; since the rest doesn't deserve a reply, I'll say no more.

No good person wins by pleading Drunkenness in court, not even with Bacchus as his judge and Cicero as his lawyer. She's accompanied by a wandering mind and dishonorable life, an abusive mouth, a fickle heart, a slippery tongue, contempt for the gods, a malicious preoccupation with fine things, the loss of one's reputation, and the disgraceful abuse of resources, as well as a base propensity for perpetrating anything and feet forever fleet for every vice.



A Final Appeal for Kids to Shun Drunkenness

And so, since Drunkenness is such a disgraceful and dangerous pleasure and the source of baneful plague and woe to alcoholics, why are college kids choosing to poison their intellectual gifts with her? Why—serious question—do they like ruining their bodies with her? Why do they like annihilating their precious best years with her, when those years are already pretty brief, fragile, and fleeting all on their own?

No, no, my promising young friends, if you straighten your lives out in this critical moment, you're already getting ahead. Study hard! Hit the books—serious ones! And add in the ennobling glory of foreign languages. The Greek Muse graces this region of ours, and she's already been showering you with them from her cornucopia. No matter how far gone you are, those hyperlearnèd centuries can bring you back to a lifestyle of frugality. You see, the Muse herself is *blooming* with poetry! You can already see men famous for it all over the world. Take them as your companions in pursuing respectability; shun getting shameful drinks with shameful people, because no man, after his ashes have burned up, rises up from food or wine and soars through the learnèd mouths of men!

Finally, don't be shortsighted. Don't let the years of precious time you've been granted pass with nothing to show for them, the way you've been doing, and don't cheat your innocent parents worrying about you back home by wasting time and money. Don't add fire to fire or flames to flames: let sober water temper your wine. The origin of Bacchus, born of a mother who got burned up by a bolt of lightning, recommends this manner of drinking. Fiery Bacchus hurls searing flames into your breast, and He's continually pouring a stream of pure torches into His alcohol. If you don't want to get hot and burn up from those torches, too, then let cold water dilute your seething bottles. Nymphs used clear water to save Bacchus' life when He was burning in the fire-spewing lightning (He would've died in the fire). Ever since, Bacchus has loved hooking up with water-nymphs. If you don't follow His example, you'll be drinking fire.



LIBER II

Adsis, Bacche pater, genialis consitor uvae,
et nobis propera funde Falerna manu.
Grandia nectareo madeant carchesia suco;
Francica perpetuo flumine vina fluant.
5Prolue vitiferos caelesti flumine colles,
et dignare tui munus obire patris.
Nos largo tamen imbre tuo perfunde, Lyaeae;
in pelagus rapidas auferat Ister aquas
ne, velut aestivis pereunt fervoribus herbae
10cum vehemens siccos Sirius urit agros,
sic mea tardato pereant arentia potu
guttura, et exhaustis viribus ora siti.
Nec te formosi munus Ganymedis obisse
taedeat; exemplum res habet ista suum.
15Nectar et ambrosiam quotiens Vulcanus et Hebe
apposuerunt deis semideisque viris?
Cum sis Vulcano potior, formosior Hebe,
et te pro Phrygio si Ganymede probo,
cur non esse velis nobis Vulcanus et Hebe,
20et Ganymedaea fundere vina manu?
Sint igitur pleni calices, pateraeque, cadique,
sint plenae trullae, plena capedo mero,
et phialae vino tumeant, si rectius uti
primus ego docui munere, Bacche, tuo,
25si, licet indocto, celebros tua numina versu,
sedulus atque libens si tua sacra colo,
aevo si nullo Bacchi debile nomen
laudibus aeternis clara per astra fero!

Te melior superis non est deus additus: ipse
30dites, formosos, ingenuosque facis.
Tu facis audaces animos, domitasque feroces.
Hoc sensit Pentheus atque Lycurgus atrox,

ille quod afflicto coepta orgia rupit Acoete,
huius te contra vis quod iniqua stetit
35quando tuas saevus Nysaeo in vertice nymphas
terrui, et trepido fert tibi Thetis opem.
Hoc Indi sensere truces, nautaeque maligni,
quos modo Carpathius per mare gurgis alit.
Spe desperantes, marcentia membra vigore
40erigis; ignavos sedulitate moves.
Quamlibet informem commendas, Bacche, puellis;
quamlibet afflicti vulnera dura, levas.
Rore tuo reficis deflentes funera matres
natorum, et lacrimas sistis, Iacche, mero.
45Paupertatis onus grave tu portabile reddis,
et facis ex humili splendida tecta casa.
Artes ipse doces; infanti plurima linguae
suggeris e plenis verba diserta cadis.
Ipse tuo dulces immittis munere somnos;
50ille tuus recreat corpora fessa liquor.
Ipse ter optatae remoraris grata iuventae
tempora, decrepitos nec sinis esse senes.
Tu potis es longae spatium transcribere vitae;
currentes potis es tu retinere dies.
55Ipse facis turbam crebro saltare senilem;
ipse etiam curvas ludere cogis anus.
Iungis amicitias, iungis, Linaee, sodales,
et tuus accendit frigida corda calor.
Ipse potes divos in magno solus Olympo,
60solus et ipse homines exhilarare potes.
Denique vitifluo demortua corpora suco
ne valeam, si non vivificare queas.
Ferreus est quem non tantarum commoda rerum,
et quem non animo Bacchica dona movent.
65Haud sic nostra stupent rigido praecordia ferro,
ut moveat virtus me tua tanta nihil.

Quare age, care parens, magno cratere repleto,
suffice non lente vina bibenda mihi.
Bis dat qui cito dat; bis gratia maior habenda est
70pro re non magna quae datur empta prece.
Cernis ut exhausto stet crater inanis Iaccho;
porge coronati vina secunda cadi
quo valeam partem reliquam superare laboris
atque suo coeptos claudere fine libros.

75Tiro, bibe, et memori mea dicta reconde Falerno.

Sobrius auriculas arrige, quaeso, tuas,
ut videas quam sit turpis, quam foeda voluptas
ebrietas, et quod sobria vita, decus.

Inter Apellaeas monumenta vetusta tabellas

80quas celebrat scriptis Graecia docta suis,
eximiam tabulam manus ingeniosa reliquit
utraque cui cedit, quas dedit ille, Venus,
altera quae nuda aequoreis emergit ab undis,
altera quae Cois non nisi coepta fuit.

85Picturam referam: superat praestantia carmen
et vincit versus ars pretiosa meos.

Late diffusus viridi stat gramine campus;

arboribus medio consitus hortus inest,
quem circumducta vallavit saepe nitentem
90floribus irrigui culta per arva soli.

Multimoda est illic vernorum copia florum,
passim quae facilem pingit amanter humum.

Lilia sunt illic, est mollis amaracus illic,
et cum sanguineis alba ligustra rosis,
95et cum purpureis violaria fusca rosetis.

Quid multis? verno cuncta colore nitent.
Non sic ture novo spirat Panchaia, non sic
vernatur odoriferis fertilis Hybla rosis.

His communis honos campum variabat et hortum
100vere novo sicut florida rura solent.

Hortum praecipuo decorabat vinea cultu
atque in fecundis vitibus uva recens.

Una dat ingressum sed ianua magna patentem,

intrantes dextra quae sita parte capit.
105Exitus angusto stat limine parte sinistra,
qua tendit raro semita trita pede,
sentibus et dumis et acutis obruta spinis,
prorsus et horrificis aspera facta rubis.

Dextera, quod tendit per amoena vireta rosasque
110molliculas, plantis est via trita crebris.

Maximus hac populi est nitidum concursus ad hortum,
quam currunt iuvenes decrepitique senes.
Ante fores niveis stabant tentoria velis,
frondosae sedes, gramineique tori,
115in quibus appositis genialibus ordine mensis,
discumbens epulis advena turba vacat.
Convivae roseis redimiti tempora sertis
sumebant hilara pocula fronte meri.

Sedibus addiderat nymphas aetate decentes,
120quae mihi sunt visae promere vina cadis,
et discumbenti cyathis apponere turbae,
et populum variis exhilarare modis.
Harum prima fuit vultu cultuque modesto
Sophrosyne praeses illius una loci.
125Haec adventantes solio composta salutat;
altera per sedes collocat Euphrosyne—
Euphrosyne formosa genas, et fronte serena
collucens, plausus laetitiaeque datrix.
Et reliquae Charites per mollia prata ministrae
130convivas multa dexteritate tenent.
Comiter et populum vino invitare videntur,
palmis portantes aurea vasa suis.
Cernitur et populi iucunda bibentis imago
per spondas variis exhilarata modis,
135cuius pars certant lucta in viridante palaestra,
pars ludunt disco, pars pede pulsat humum.
Sunt qui sermonem inter se conferre videntur,
et sunt qui iuncta carmina voce canunt.
Musica quin etiam praesto instrumenta iacebant:
140tibia cum cithara, fistula, plectra, lyrae.
Quid multis? istic habitarunt agmine laeto
deliciae, lusus, otia, cantus, amor.
Plurima mundities frugali splendida luxu,
quae deceat magnos non fugienda duces.
145Diffusis animis generosi munere Bacchi
et sumptis epulis, pars abiere domum
compositi et laeto testantes gaudia vultu
atque salutata praeside Sophrosyne.

Pars, nondum contenta mero, tendebat in hortum,
150multum despecta praeside Sophrosyne.
Cuius in introitu rubeis stat femina buccis
atque saginata, Crapula dicta, cute.
Haec capite et geminis ad se vocat agmina palmis,

ostendens patulas officiosa fores,
155atque, ut totius facies tibi discolor horti
nota sit, haec paucis carmina pauca cape.

Praesidet in medio regali femina cultu

ebria, femineo cincta satellitio,
pampineis sertis comptos ornata capillos
160et manibus phialam, ceu bibitura, tenens.
Hanc iuxta famulae pateras calicesque gerentes,
intranti turbae vina bibenda ferunt.
Quarum prima mihi visa est Dementia dici;
ex habitu et vultu, proxima Luxuria.
165Tertia Lethaeis Oblivio nata sub undis.
Attonitae similis, quarta sedebat humi,
quae mihi Pigrities Languoris filia visa est,
stillantem cyathum semisopita tenens.
Quinta furoriferae sociata Paroenia Rixae
170vicina post hanc in statione stetit.
Postremam tenuit vecors Insania sedem,
cum Rabie, et iuncto fratre Furore sibi.

Has circumsistunt ursi, vituli, atque Molossi,

plurimus et longis auribus Arcas equus,
175balantes et oves, hirci cum cercopithecis
atque lupi atque boves, saetigerique sues
ex hominum facie mutati in monstra ferarum,
postquam feminea vina bibere manu.
Intrabant homines humana fronte, manebant
180tales humana denique fronte diu;
gustato potu, in formas abiere ferinas,
pristina nec cuiquam mansit imago sua.
Tamquam Circaeis haurirent pocula sucis,
sic subito formis emicuere novis.

185Primum censebam cernendo talia Circen

reginam in medio stare, nec illa fuit,
sed fuit Ebrietas, Graeis signata figuris:
πάντων οἰνοπότων ἡ βασίλισσα, Μέθη.

At quae multiplicum confusio foeda ferarum!

190Quae vitae facies interioris erat!
Nam mixtim patulis visae sunt rictibus una
omnes discordi vociferare sono.
Ex alia sed parte vomunt de gutture vinum
vinosae indicium simplicitatis oves.

195Quae egessere, canes eadem mox frustra resorbent,
in caeno volvunt dum sua terga sues,
serpentesque vomunt diros viridesque lacertas:
dispeream si te carmine ludo meo!
Vaccas et vitulos, ranas vomere atque cicadas
200vidisses, gemmas octipedesque capros.
Porro asini libros, enses cum fustibus ursi,
mures et catts evomuere lupi.
Indecores saltus exercent cercopithecii,
quorum pars maior florea sarta gerunt.
205Nec procul alternis laniant se dentibus ursi,
et furiunt multa seditione lupi.
Quos Furor et Rabies in mutua vulnera trudunt,
ceu geminas acies quae fera bella gerunt.

Parte sed in laeva, qua cernitur exitus horti

210et via per modicas non bene trita fores,
in caeno, in vomitu mixtorum foeda animantum
corpora confuso strata sopore iacent,
partim vulneribus, partim quoque saucia vino,
tamquam caesorum mortua turba foret.
215Quorum pars surgit discusso languida somno
et repetit celeri lustra priora pede.
Pars nacta humanam faciem, sed pelle ferina
tectata, petit tenues sobria facta fores.
Hortoque egreditur pedibus male firma, graduque
220incerto, membris mutila turba suis.
Qualem monticolae speciem gessere bimembres,
talis semiferae turbae abeuntis erat.

Egressis vetulae laqueos et vincla gerentes

occurrunt, captis iniciuntque manus,
225et duro faciles castigant verbere vinctos
atque renitentes fustibus usque domant.
Quas inter, non est in plures saevior ulla
quam prima articulis attenuata suis,
pallida quae partim, partim rubet ignea vultu,
230et nisi me fallunt omnia, Febris erat.
Saevit et in multos membris turgentibus una
Hydrops, sulphurei crassa coloris anus.
Nec furit in paucos scabioso corpore Psora,
hos pulsans, illos improba crine trahens.
235Una sed ante alias sexcentis obsita pannis
afficit omnino corpora nuda flagris:
squalida Paupertas cernentibus esse videtur,

mendici specie sordida, macra fame.
Velivolo curru cum Leto vecta Senectus,
240proterit et iuvenes, proterit axe senes.
Et plures aliae, quarum mihi nomina non sunt
cognita, captivos sub iuga dura trahunt.

Talis Apelleae tabulae florentis imago,
et facies veteri grammate picta fuit,
245quam tibi, non quali decuit, depinximus arte;
vicit enim haec versus ingeniosa meos.
Nunc superest, pictis quae sit sententia formis,
carmine non longo discutienda mihi.



Conspicis hac geminas prisca sub imagine vitas,
250et speculum siccae laetitiae atque methes.
Laetitiae est extra locus, ebrietatis at intra,
mansio vitigeri florida saepta loci.
Sed via per campum, quae maxima ducit ad hortum,
copiaque innumerae plebis euntis eam,
255significat cupide sectarier otia cunctos,
adque voluptates mente animoque rapi,
sed tamen hos servare modum, et discedere Baccho
perfunctos, salva cum ratione domum;
illos, ignorare modum tempusque fruendi
260atque ideo in saeptis lustra diurna sequi,
amissa donec penitus ratione, bibones
videris in brutum degenerasse pecus,
nec prius absistunt lustris ratione relictis,
quam illos aut morbus durior inde fuget,
265aut tandem nudos abigat penuria rerum,
semiferos durae proiciendo fami.

Haec est Ebrietas; cultoribus ista rependit
dona suis, hosti vix satis apta dari.
Ebrietas furiale malum, blandumque venenum,
270mellitum exitium, dulcis amarities.
Ebrietas vitium deforme, et foeda voluptas;
hanc fuge ceu pestem corporis atque animi;
cui nunc sacra ferunt passim iuvenesque senesque
vesani, pulsa Sobrietate procul.
275Hoc, mihi crede, malo non est praesentius ullum,
quo citius perdis corpus et ingenium.

Nullius exemplo quamvis moveare potentis,
quem turpi affectus labe sequare ducem.

Non aliud vitium nunc magnas possidet aulas,

280quamvis nunc vitiis omnibus aula scatet.

Sic, velut ebrietas, quae summam prendidit arcem,

perpetua ebrietas aulica vita modo est,

nec gratus tumidae servit modo sobrius aulae

quaestor, eques, consul, mulio, scribe, coquus.

285Cernis thyrsigeros passim regnare merones;

assidua stillant ebrietate duces.

Si poteris, bone tiro, elephantia aequare bibendo,

aulicus ex aulis praemia digna feres.

Non alio studio nunc ordo tenetur equestris;

290quisque cupit multo nobilis esse mero.

Qui quondam intrepidus Mavorti pectore et armis,

edidit Hectoreae fortia facta manus,

mollii feminei sequitur nunc castra Lyaei,

et sequitur spreto pocula Marte piger.

295Pro clipeo cyathos tractat, pro cuspidē thyrsos,

pro galea sertis implicat ille comas.

Quae, rogo, nunc alia infatuat vesania cives?

Ebrietas omni regnat in urbe potens.

Vinosos servos festa olim luce Lacones

300spectandos natis exhibuere suis

quo detestari puerilis disceret aetas,

hoc vitii, morum turpia probra videns.

Nunc ipsi patres servorum exempla sequuntur,

suntque suis natis ebrietate duces.

305Sed quid sectatur nisi Bacchanalia vulgus?

Ebria vinosum pocula vulgus amat.

Sobria frugalis quos vitae lumina vulgus

ieiunos monachos, sacrificosque putat,

qui praeter sanctam nil laudant sobrietatem,

310quorum lingua sitim, pocula mensa probat,

tradita perpetuae sybarissat turba saginae

et vacat assiduae luxuriando methe [= μέθη].

Denique non aliud, si vitam expendis ad unguem,

religiosorum quaeritat ille chorus:

315scorta, voluptates, instructae pocula mensae,

deliciae, luxus, sabbata, lautitiae,

otia, taxilli, turpissima lustra, popinae,

libertas scelerum, vita labore vacans,

verticibus rasis, sectis, variisque cucullis,

320implerunt omnes prorsus in orbe plagas.

Ebrietas toto breviter non cessat in orbe;

sunt passim bibulis omnia plena viris.

Haec illa est lato tritissima semita calle,
vadere continue quam cupit omnis homo.

325Est in contemptu frugalis vita; libido
potandi cunctos prodigiosa tenet.

Ducitur ebrietas nunc virtus maxima; nemo
carpentem hanc sicco rebitur ore loqui.

Quaeritur hac celebris nunc cunctis gloria; cunctis

330quaeritur hac nomen, gratia, fama, favor.

Nemo bonus nunc est, nec strenuus esse videtur,
plurima ni poterit perdere vina bibax.

Nullus eris si sunt ignavae ad pocula vires;
plurima ni sicces pocula, nullus eris.

335Quocirca flexos oculos intendere turbae
qui vult, exemplo fallitur ille malo;

nec degustatam dulci medicamine lotum
deseret—ut socii, ductor Ulysse, tui.

Te trahat exemplum nullum blandissima Siren,
340si salva e vino puppe natare cupis.

Contemplare, precor, foedos, puer optime, mores,

et pone ante oculos turpia quaeque tuos,

quae bibuli amissa peccant ratione; videbis
hac facie nullum foedius esse chaos:

345mutatos homines dices in monstra ferarum
horrida Circaeis esse veneficiis.

Tollere clamorem cogeris imagine visa
symposii, et motus dicere voce truci:

“Cedite lurcones, comedones, cedite ventres,
350turpe genus mystae cedite thyrsigeri!

Quae vos vita tenet plusquam pecuina, bibosi?

Quae furiae, quaeso, pectora vestra movent?

Hoc non est gaudere, sed insanire, bibones;
hoc equidem est vinum perdere, non bibere!

355Vita voluptati quibus est turpissima, quique
virtutem solidam nomen inane putant

et famae titulum vilem melioris habentes,
sectantur vestri turpia lustra gregis.”

Exuit hic hominem qui talem vivere vitam

360sustinet, et sensus perdidit ille suos.

Nullum sic brutum, neque bestia sic bibit ulla;

mensuram potus nam pecus omne tenet.
Ergo, solus homo—iam bruto turpior omni—
potandi nullum novit habere modum?
365 Quem Deus ipse sua formavit imagine, quemque
egregiis animi dotibus excoluit,
ille feras omnes, animalia cuncta pudendus
exsuperat foeda, bestia spurca, gula.
At non ille sator iucundae vitis in orbem
370 sparsit in hoc placidi munera grata meri.
Non iubet eximiis temere nos rebus abuti,
dummodo sedandae sunt data vina siti.
Non prohibet iustum sumendi nectaris usum,
sed neque cum genio bella gerenda docet.
375 Assidua graviter fert ebrietate madentes;
ebrietas vitio continuata datur.
Sed neque mox properans, quotiens sitientius aequo
hauseris, iratus currit ad arma pater.

Quippe potest fieri ut, Bacchi dulcedine capto

380 imponant animo vina dolosa tuo.
Errasti imprudens; facit hoc placabile crimen;
culpa frequens digna est crimine, rara vacat.
Crebri supplicium lapsus poenamque merentur;
ebrietas poena est afficienda frequens.

385 Vive hilaris, laetusque tuis crateras amicis

plenaque convivis pocula pone tuis,
ac tua iucundo placato pectora vino,
quae gravibus curis exanimata geris,
dummodo ne fines, cave, transgrediare bibendo.
390 Omnia nam meta sunt cohibenda sua,
ne ratio multo submersa vel obruta vino,
fluctuet in mediis naufraga facta cadis.

Qualia nunc agitant ferme convivia nostri,

in quibus Ebrietas arce suprema sedet.
395 Nemo contente, nemo frugaliter istic
Bacchi concessa pocula more colit.
Respice convivas ab amico forte vocatos;
comperies equidem me tibi vera loqui.
Nemo sepositis diffusus nectare curis,
400 iucundis quaerit solvere corda iocis;
nemo Sophrosynem dignatur honore modestam;
nemo respectum sobrietatis habet.
Qui non aequali cursu contendat in hortum,

vix nunc in toto cernier orbe datur.

405Sed nunc bella vide patriae convivia nostrae;

cur procul exemplum, lector amice, petas?

In quibus, ut madidos hospes dimittat amicos,

hoc studet, hoc cunctis nititur ille modis.

Protinus infuso certant pugnare Lyaeo:

410primum uno, gemino mox calice, inde tribus.

Pocula siccantur, cyathi vertuntur in orbem;

potatur strepitu concutiente domum.

Et vetus atque novum vario cratere Falernum

promitur; hic veteri provocat, ille novo.

415Ex alia rubei veniunt de parte coloris,

cuius perspicuo vina bibenda vitro.

Iam quis facticia atque exotica vina recenset

quae saltem ingluvies pocla profunda vorat?

Accedunt madidae Cereris coniuncta Lyaeo

420pocula; non aequis, credo, reperta deis.

Mox abaci vino stillant, et scamna lavantur,

perfusumque bibit plurima vina solum.

De mensis currunt crescentia flumina rivis;

haud visi raro sunt mihi nare cadi.

425Tantus adest luxus, tanta est profusio vini,

tot submersa mero pocula plena fluunt.

Non movet haec quemquam facies turpissima, dicunt

“Hic hic Germani discubere boni!”

Sed postquam indomitum vicit praecordia vinum,

430et natat in madido lubrica lingua loco,

quam tunc spurcitiam, quae tunc obscaena, pudore

abterso, profert ebria turba, precor?

Hic nullus verbis pudor aut reverentia mensae est;

hic ratio castae nulla pudicitiae.

435Hic nusquam tenerae puerorum parcitur auri;

dicuntur vitae noxia verba piae.

Promitur obscaena Milesia fabula lingua,

historiae molles, turpia furta, Venus.

Iactatur madido ficulnus in ore Priapus,

440narrantur Cypriae proelia spurca deae.

Turpia ridiculae cantantur carmina Musae,

et mera postremo mensa venena vomit.

Ecce tibi porcos serpentibus atque lacertis

plenos, serpentum virus ab ore vomunt.

445Vipera tam praesens, nec habet salamandra venenum,

non anguis, dipsas, bufo, lacerta, draco.

Noxia letiferi haud est sic facies basilisci;
lurida non adeo sic aconita nocent.
Non in somnifica tantas reor aspide vires
450nec tantum immundus stellio virus habet
quantum habet illorum turpissima mensa veneni
et quantum illorum perdita lingua nocet.
Quilibet urbanus lepido studet ore videri;
vult quisque hic alium vincere spurcitia.
455Et quantum ante mero, tantum nunc turpiter ore
obscaeno certant verba pudenda loqui.

Adde quod innumeri retegant arcana gulones,
quae prius in tacito delituere sinu.
Deposito referunt in apertum condita fuco
460et sibimet fraudi lingua gravata mero est.
Quid quod et infreni vinosis excidit ore
improba per iugulum vox reditura suum?
Fertur vera, nimis iactata, paroemia vulgo:
VINA GUBERNACULO NON MODERATA CARENT.
465Mensuram vini superans et mentis et oris,
crede, potens non est amplius ille sui:
sobrius occulte tacito quae corde premebat,
haec stolido cunctis ebrius ore refert.
Nam sicco quae corde latent, haec ebria lingua
470effert, atque facit cuncta sepulta palam.
Dedecus ipsa suum, sua cunctis ulcera pandit,
quae bene celarat dissimulata prius.
Hi proprio indicio produntur et infatuantur,
atque ideo mures turpiter ore vomunt.

475Sunt qui ridicule sacra de lege frequenter
dummodo iam poti, disseruisse solent.
Scrutantur rerum mysteria cuncta sacrarum,
qua iuuet alma pios utilitate fides,
quid lex, quid Christus, quid gratia praestitit, et quae
480possit homo arbitrio, lege iubente, suo,
quos Deus aeternae praesciverit undique vitae,
diraque sub Stygio quos Iove poena manet.
Hic vero bibulas inter discordia turbas
exoritur, pugnam quae parit orta gravem,
485de sacris quotiens profertur quaestio rebus,
dum negat ingenio cedere quisque suo.
Omnia divinae quamvis abscondita legis
ceu digitos pugnant noscere posse suos.
Quare prostituunt ventres mysteria Christi,

490 quae saltem siccis sunt meditanda viris.

O compotores, foedum pecus, ut mihi saepe

moverunt mollem iurgia vestra iocum!

Nam dum ridicula pugna certatis asoti,

num bona adhuc opera sint facienda quoque,

495 cernimus haud ullum fieri laudabile factum

per vos, quod purae sit bonitatis opus.

Quam, quod sat fidi (si dis placet) estis amicis

dum miseros calices vestra popina vorat,

annuitis facile ut vobis sorbentibus unum,

500 proximus impigre pocula dena bibat!

Omnis in hoc vestrae pugnae lis cardine pendet,

quod caro sit iussa non maceranda fame.

Pluribus haec verbis haud argumenta bibones

confirmant, factis fortius illa probant.

505 Iussi ieiunant numquam, nec sponte dometur

ut caro, ieiuno vivere ventre student.

Quippe pigrum semper replent abdomine ventrem

addicti vino perpetuaeque gulae,

et, quae praecipue capit admiratio multos,

510 non hos ulla fames, non premit ulla sitis.

Quo tamen hosce minus vexat sitis habrodiaetos

hoc arcus instar largius usque bibunt.

Dolia sunt, credo, in quae vasta Daneia turba

nec quicquam refugas anxia fundit aquas.

515 Quo plus namque meri crebro in cava guttura fundunt

hoc magis atque magis pocula crebra petunt.

Tales immundos Epicuri de grege porcos

efficiunt tantum plurima vina pios.

Inde vomi a rudibus quis demiretur asellis

520 in tabula numquam quos didicere libros?

Interea crescunt securae tempora vitae,

iraque contempti non bene spreta Dei.

Caelorum dominum bibulorum nemo requirit;

irati nemo numina magna timet.

525 Quis sic iudicii poterit meminisse futuri?

Quis potis est mortis sic meminisse suae?

Fabula sunt superi, Stygii sunt fabula manes,

fabula sunt bibulis alta barathra viris.

Nec, quae vinosis caelestia regna negarit,

530 vox Pauli bibulos dura minaxque movet.

Quis vero memoret quam dent se turpiter omnes

hic, ubi iam largis incalueret cadis?

Promptius expediam quot monstris mundus abundet,
aut quot alat varias Africa terra feras,
535Ionia undisoni quot pulsant litora fluctus,
saevus ubi Boreas flatibus aequor agit,
aut quot Erythraeo nascantur in aequore conchae,
aut quot odoratis floreat Hybla rosis.
Percurram citius vitia exsecranda Papatus,
540quae nullus longa scriberet Iliade,
qui nam lege sua totum deceperit orbem,
Christi pervertens omnia verba Dei;
qualibus ille dolis impostor et artibus usus
concessit raptas totius orbis opes,
545quotque suis bullis animas demiserit Orco
Romanus praesul sanctulus ille pater.

Est qui perfusus vino lacrimatur, et est qui
nullum ridendi novit habere modum.
Alter opes iactat, formosae coniugis alter
550praedicat et speciem, et pignora nata domi.
Tertius Irus egens, quamquam ditissimus aeris,
deflet egestatis plurima damna suae.
Audaces animos gerit inter pocula miles,
sobrius aspecto comminus hoste fugit.
555Pluribus exhausto crescit sapientia vino,
fitque Solon subito qui fuit ante Midas.
Hic furit, ille boat, cacat alter, perbibit alter.
Ille, quod ingessit, turpiter inde vomit.
A vomitu stomachum properat replere gravatum;
560mox iterum et famulos fundere vina iubet.
Saepe etiam, o, turpes quicquid vomuere resorbent,
ut canis egestos colligit ore cibos,
aut aliquid foedi et crudi, quod nauseat alter,
saepe vorant fortes ebrietate viri:
565vitrea vasa, choas [= χῶς], nec sunt a morsibus illis
in caveis tutae, quae modulantur, aves.
Ille refert Cynicos nudis saltare pudendis;
568non dubitans, quiddam turpius alter agit.
571Hic foede ructat, somno iacet ille profundo,
572stertens, oppletus sordibus et vomitu.
569Quintus adit rixas, et lingua pugnat amara,
570illidens madido pocula fracta solo.
573Non pauci quaerunt amissa veste lutoque
foedati, sera repere nocte domum.
575Plures ad proprios, ceu sarcina plumbea, nidos

portantur; cantat taetrius ante fores
factus amator iners; dicas, mihi crede, luporum
impulsos rabie sic ululare greges.
Haec illa est bibulae turpis comoedia vitae,
580cuius ubique viris plena theatra vides.
Illa mihi superest actu claudenda supremo,
ut constet numeris fabula tota suis.

Nullus in hac patitur vacuus spectator haberi,
histrio sed quivis fervidus esse cupit,
585nec gravat hic proceres vilis persona Dromonis,
nec magnos mimos hic pudet esse duces.
Quid facerent plebes, procerum sorbente corona?
Aemula sunt capiti cetera membra suo.
Et cum de tali nisi parta laude theatro
590quaerat adhuc firmo nullus abire pede,
nemo tamen scenae curat servire decenter;
e bibulis populo nemo placere studet.
Turpia cordatis crebro spectacula praebent,
et pueris risum saepe movere solent,
595vel cum per medias gressu titubante plateas
incedit nimio turba gravata mero,
vel cum nocturnis sunt edita proelia lustris,
mane per insanum commemoranda forum,
vel cum magniloqua se iactant voce bibones:
600ille, quot hesterna pocula nocte bibit;
alter, quot solus socios, Baccho duce, victos
compulerit somno tradere membra gravi;
ille, quot insomnis tractas per pocula noctes
egerit, assidue labra rigante mero;
605alter ridenti iurat se voce dies per
iam multos sanum non habuisse caput;
ille, quot amissa noctes ratione bibendo
sterterit in foeda forte relictus hara.
Est qui devicto se iactitet hospite, deque
610tota devicta sorbitione domo.
Non licet a bibulis alios audire triumphos;
laude vehunt hausti fixa tropaea meri.
Porro, quid haec aliud turpis iactantia signat,
(si cupimus recta rem reputare via)
615quam semel amissis rationis sensibus, omnes
in brutum bibulos degenerasse pecus?
Nemo sperabit bene sanae mentis honestum
e re se turpi sumere posse decus,

nec quemquam credo (nisi sit sceleratus et excors)
620turpiter ob vitium turpe placere sibi.

Foedius est aliquid, seu turpius, ebrietate—
quemlibet immemorem quae facit esse sui,
quae parit effrontes et corda oblita pudoris
cogit in absurdum currere quodque nefas,
625quaeque sui quosvis sublato iure potentes
deicit, imbelles invalidosque parans
ut iam non titubans pes, non mens, linguaque possint
amplius officium, lector, obire suum?
Obruitur gravis immodico sapientia vino;
630franguntur multo fortia corda mero.
Maenades insanae Bacchum comitantur inertem:
has nisi lurcones ebria monstra puta.
Cunctarum tollit Bacchus discrimina rerum,
atque hominem prorsus non sinit esse hominem.



635Sed tamen hinc clarae venantur praemia famae;
quaerendi hinc bibulos nominis ardor habet.
Potorem invictum dici laus maior habetur
quam dici Hectoreis ausibus esse parem.
Hanc avide famam properant contingere cuncti
640laudis, et hanc aliis praeripuisse iuvat.
Si venit e nigro memorabile nomine nomen,
si venit e vitiis candida fama malis,
si parit aeternam fugienda infamia laudem,
turpia si praestant lustra perenne decus,
645quis non perpetuo victuros tempore speret
infames bibulos, dulcis Iacche, tuos?
At non infami subsurgit gloria fama;
turpibus e rebus gloria nulla venit.
Est ad virtutem tenuis perque ardua callis;
650hoc saeptum duris sentibus horret iter.
Hinc ille assequitur celebris praeconia famae,
qui tolerat casus laudis amore graves.
Non vino, virtus sudore paranda, paratur,
et famae crescit sedulitate decus.
655Sed quae sunt tandem illius praeconia laudis,
o bibule, aut famae portio quanta bonae,
si tua multibibae vesania foeda coronae
laudatur, sanis vituperata viris?

Scilicet hinc oritur clarum et laudabile nomen
660si iugi madeas plena lagoena mero
aut si nemo tuo vasto cum gutture iustum
certamen vini potor inire potest?
Hoc esset barathrum, et vastam superare Charybdim,
aut Irim bibulam vincere velle siti.
665Haud alio Atridam vitio commotus Achilles,
vituperans graviter mente calente vocat.
Si fuerat virtus petulans temulentia, certe haec
in duce tam magno laude vehenda fuit.

Exuis humanos sensus, et bestia factus

670ut paucis placeas turpia quaeque facis.
De grege vinoso partes fert ille priores,
et caput est bibuli famaue prima chori,
quem norunt omnes lenones, scorta, bibones,
caupones, mimi, balnea cuncta, coqui,
675lusores, scurrae, lenae, vetulae, parasiti,
mensipetae, servi, sordida lustra, proci;
adde ambubaias, tonsores, adde Gnathones,
et reliquum luxus desidiaequae gregem.
Egregiam vero laudem et spolia ampla reportas,
680ista tuam laudat si mala turba gulam.
Cui dum ridicule conaris, amice, probari
diceris infamis perditus atque nepos.

Dumque his obsequeris, vilis tibi vita videtur;
proicis hanc tamquam putrida poma forent,
685inque tuum peccas graviter turpissime corpus,
o gulo, praepropera mox periture nece!
Nam dum plura, nepos, quam par est vina ligurris,
ipse ferus certe fis homicida tui.
Iuppiter immodicis quoque suffocat imbris arva;
690imber alit siccos, sed moderatus, agros.
Multus obest vini, prodest moderatior usus:
hunc sapiens, illum non bene sanus amat.

Accelerat varios Sybaritica vita dolores;

illa subit morbos multiplicesque cruces.
695Amittunt habilem vino enervata vigorem
membra; malis corpus fluxibus omne dolet.
Hinc tremuli capitis vertigo odiosa resurgit;
hinc ille assidue pallor in ore sedet.
Inde manus tremulae, digitique rigore retorti,
700vincit ubi articulos saeva chiragra leves.

Hinc torpent nervi sine sensu saepe iacentes,
stringit et incertos inde podagra pedes;
hinc oculi fluidi, lippi, semperque rubentes;
hinc male corrupto tormina ventre ruunt;
705hinc utraque sonat stridens tinnitus ab aure,
ceu sonat in duris rauca cicada rubis;
hinc quoque multiplices veniunt denso agmine febres;
hinc psorae, hinc scabies, hinc quoque dirus hydrops;
hinc subitae mortes, atque intestata senectus,
710funeraque in gelido mane reperta toro;
sunt hinc nocturno furiales tempore somni;
hinc multis spectris irrequieta quies;
hinc ille est olidi deterrimus halitus oris,
foeteat ut crebro spurca cloaca minus.
715Denique totius corruptio corporis inde
imminet exitio proxima multiplici.
Haec tua si viridis non sentit damna iuventus,
hoc graviora tibi sunt toleranda seni—
si non ante diem te funere mergit acerbo
720ebrietas, plenis immoderata cadis.
Omnino bibulam sequitur morbose iuventam,
subiecta innumeris ante senecta malis.
Semper habet comitem stolidam haec vesania poenam:
sunt morbi immodicae praemia luxuriae.
725Atque haec est sero egredientibus obvia turba;
hae vetulae bibulos lychnobiosque manent.
Tanti quod mentem mutet constare videmus
unde solet rabies, unde venire furor,
unde tot afflictas veniunt dispendia vitae,
730damnaque Paeonia non medicanda manu.
Post, ubi corruptum est nimio iam corpus Iaccho,
et dotes animi disperiere tui,
obruit et bibulos cunctarum oblivio rerum:
partem animi memorem plurima vina necant,
735non secus ac Stygii Lethaea fluminis unda
tollitur e memori pectore vita prior.

Ut taceam rixas, lites, convicia, caedes
multiplices factas ebrietate duce,
non opus est rebus manifestis addere testes,
740sed tamen e multis pauca referre volo.
(Et quid ego longe peregrina exempla requiram?
Fare, age: Quid nuper perdidit agricolas?
Ebria seditio villas vastavit et agros

igne, furore, manu, sanguine, caede, nece.)
745Invictum Hannibalem Campani pocula luxus,
vincibilem Latio sola dedere duci.
Magnus Alexander vino furiosus, amice,
infecit mensam sanguine, Clite, tuo.
Quo scelere imperio Vitellius excidit, unco
750tractus? deliciis, sanguine, pene, mero.
Non alia exstinxit sceleratum vita Neronem,
sectatum mores, Sardanapale, tuos.
Quid memorem plures vitio ebrietatis avito
de solio pulsos imperioque duces?
755Excute Romanas annales, excute nostros,
si magis exacte talia nosse cupis.
Si quid habet vatum priscorum fabula veri,
et multo Lapithae succubuere mero.
Si non Dulichios utres, Polypheme, bibisses,
760servasses oculum sic, Polypheme, tuum.
Iudith Holofernem necat ebrietate sepultum,
id quod lectorem Biblia sacra docent.
Ebrietate, trahit quae cuncta nefaria secum
crimina, cum Sodoma versa Gomorrha iacet.
765Quot iuvenes nostro saeclo satis indole clara
his pessum vitiis ebrietatis eunt?

Viribus exhaustis exhaurit et illa crumenam;
Herculeos census conterit Ebrietas.
Thesaurus Croesi Ebrietas Crassique voraret:
770hac res, hac patriae dilapidantur opes.
Obsita panniculis comes Ebrietatis Egestas
fertur, Egestatis nigra Laverna comes.
Haec te post nudum compellet ad improba facta,
utque pares nummos suggeret arte mala.
775Artibus exitium lucrabere turpe malignis;
hic tandem finis ebrietatis erit.
Semper enim venter solitis vult rebus inanis
distendi, festos semper habere dies.
Otia venter amat, vult plenae pocula mensae;
780delicias, luxum, lautitiasque cupit.
Iam nisi divitiae Lydi aut opulentia Crassi
adsit, non poteris otia lenta sequi.
Divitiae ignavis sunt nullae; ignavia, si quas
sedulitas peperit, pigra profundit opes.

785**Et tamen assidua magis assuetudine crescit**
potandi per se magna libido satis.

Hanc potes illaesus numquam deponere; numquam
hanc degustatam linquere, tiro, potes.
Non bene gustatur tenero, mihi crede, palato,
790esca voluptatis perfidiosa malae,
quod semel haud facilis sit degustata relictu:
pellitur a pingui non bene pelle canis.
Aegre Ithacus potuit socios avellere loto,
quam modice primis vix tetigere labris,
795dulce voluptatis lotus blandumque venenum,
quod degustatum linquere nemo potest.

Interea nemo quem cura domestica, quemque
cum pueris uxor sollicitaret, erit,
quae, dum tu potas, dum plurima pocula sorbes,
800dum genio indulges, spongia plena, tuo,
nuda sedens misere deserta luget in aula,
esurit et vacuum fortiter ante focum,
sive pudicitiam vendit (sic cogit Egestas),
et formam in quaestu flebilis uxor habet.
805Tu quoque forte alio flagras tunc moechus ab igne,
semper ut est Baccho foeda libido comes;
sic facis uxorem lecti violare pudici
ieiunam, sancta foedera iuncta fide,
aut illi pugnīs durissima cena paratur
810et petit ingratum fuste cibata torum.



Obstrepiť hic nobis contracta fronte magister
qui cecinit laudes, ebria turba, tuas,
dum quae laudavit culparier audit, et inquit:
“Hoc pretium laudes promeruerē meae!
815Ebrietas, nobis laudata, refellitur abs te
nec te quae oppono saecula multa movent
nec tibi tot gentes animum flexere bibosae
nec te persuadent commoda tanta meri?”
Huius ego nugas quamquam satis ante refelli,
820noxia dum quam sint pocula multa probo.
Cum tamen antiquis vinosos laudet ab annis,
ceu facerent vitiis tempora prisca decus,
hac ratione potest moechos laudare pudendos,
hac turpes lenas, hac ratione lupas.
825Hac ratione potest quosvis laudare latrones,
hoc pacto laudet quodlibet ille nefas:

perfidiam, fraudem, raptum, periuria, caedes,
illicitam Venerem, furta, veneficium.

Affluit his etenim vitiis annosa vetustas:

830ebria non tantum, nec temulenta fuit.

Non minus est vitium multis quod, lector, ab annis
est factum, quam quae nunc vitiosa vides.

Copia nec populi vitium levat ebrietatis:
nec Lot deceptus, nec patriarcha Noe.

835Nam qui cum multis aut sanctis ebrius errat,
aggravat errorem qui fugiendus erat.

Nil etiam excusat peccantum copia noxam,
nec purgat vitium quod populare fuit.

“Ebrietas curis mulcendis utilis,” inquit,
840“tollitur et animis ebrietate dolor.”

Hoc facile affirmo; dum mens est obruta vino,
curarum sentit vulnera nulla madens;

ast ubi iam indomiti concoxit pocula vini,
et iam edormivit sobria facta merum,

845ilico maiores et plus quam mille recursant
curae, quae duro pectora dente vorant.

Nempe quod effuso gestanda sit aere crumena,
nec liceat solito semper adesse mero,

creditor hinc urget, puer esurit, esurit uxor,
850flagitat aes pistor, flagitat aes lanius:

ut careat curis, semper rere esse bibendum?
Hoc est te stolidam dicere stultitiam.

Egregios vero iungit Lenaeus amicos,
qui durant dum sunt pocula plena mero;

855et quod prisca sonant quondam proverbialia dicta,
dum fervent ollae, vivit amicitia.

Heus, bone, non vino virtute parantur amici,
quorum non umquam sit metuenda fides.

Fluxa fides bibulis; experto crede, videbis
860lurconum vitream semper amicitiam.

Ista magistralis fuerat farrago libelli;
cetera—responso non bene digna—premam.

Nullius ebrietas, non si Cicerone patrono
sit rea sub Baccho iudice, causa boni est.

865Quam vaga mens, et vita parum comitatur honesta,
os petulans, animus, lubrica lingua, levis,

contemptus superum, rerum mala cura bonarum,
perditio famae, turpis abusus opum;

ad mala proclivis propensio quaeque patrandi,
870veloces vitium semper in omne pedes.



Ergo, Methe cum sit tam foeda nocensque voluptas

unde venit bibulis pestis et atra lues,
quid iuvat hac iuvenes animi corrumpere dotes?

Quid iuvat hac corpus perdere, quaeso, male?
875 Quid iuvat hac florem tenerae exstinxisse iuventae,
quae per se satis est aegra, caduca, brevis?

Quin emendata, tali iam tempore, vita
consulis o melius, culta iuventa, tibi.

Incumbens studiis doctos evolve libellos,
880 et tibi linguarum nobile iunge decus,
quas tibi iam pleno suffundit copia cornu,
quae decorat nostras Attica Musa plagas.

Ista ad frugalem tam saecula docta diaetam
quamvis corruptum te revocare queant.
885 Floret enim nunc ipsa suis iam Musa Camenis;
iam passim celebres cernis in orbe viros.

Hos ad honestatem comites tibi sume sequendam;
pocula cum foedis sumere foeda, cave.

Nullus enim patinis aut vino emerget ut, ustos
890 post cineres, volitet docta per ora virûm.

Denique concessos pretiosi temporis annos
transigere haud temere sic sine fruge velis,
atque domi trepidos suspensa mente parentes,
fallas absumpto tempore et aere rudis.

895 Ne velis ignem igni, nec flammis addere flammās;
temperet indomitum sobria lympa merum;

haec via potandi monstratur origine Bacchi
fulmine combusta de genitrice sati.

Igneus urentes iacit in praecordia flammās,
900 atque mero usque meras ingerit ille faces.

His si nolueris et tu calefactus aduri,
frigida ferventes diluat unda cados.

Ignivomo Bacchum flagrantem fulmine nymphae
servarunt liquidis (igne perisset) aquis.

905 Ex hoc nympharum Baccho coniunctio grata est;
hanc nisi secteris, quod bibis, ignis erit.



BOOK 3

HOW TO WIN AT DRINKING GAMES

A Recap and an Invocation of Bacchus

So far, I've discussed how a moderate intake is proper for gentlemen, and I've sung the praises of the sober life. I've added the topic of binge drinkers—shameful, disgraceful monsters!—and the endless problems destructive Drunkenness brings. Now, Bacchus, I will sing—provided you give my song the strength—of those battles of Yours that must be won by abundantly flowing *alcohol*; I'll sing of invincible opponents and hearts that know not how to surrender, no matter *how* weak unlimited bottles have made them! Nod Your head toward me, Father; calm Your horns, withdraw them, and billow my project's sails with favorable winds!

First, though, grant my thirsting Muses noble wine! After a drink, a thousand poems will flow better!

Enlisting the Reader: I Want *YOU* for Bacchus' Army

Grab your weapons, my raw recruit, and steel your manly heart for battle. Go boldly under my generalship into the fray!

- For a helmet, set soft garlands on your head!
- Let your hair drip with the dew of fragrant water!
- A bottle shall be your breastplate,
- a massive wine bowl your shield,
- a wineglass shall serve as your trusty sword!
- Grab a ladle for your sling,
- a slender thyrsus for your spear,
- let an empty flagon serve as your clarion!

Let a soldier of Mars go get weapons from Vulcan; *these* weapons are right for Bacchus' militia! *That's* the fun and entertaining way to enter a drinking contest and walk away with trophies dripping with

gleaming alcohol. Bacchus used no other weapons in His conquest of the Orient and people of India; He uses no others to subdue all His domains.

Therefore, let him who has prowess and a resolute heart in his breast—if anyone likes wine and is gripped with a burning thirst—come and raise a glass with energetic hands; worthy rewards await the winner of this battle.

Are You in It to Win It?

Nobody'd better hope to sweat it out against me in this arena if they aren't eager to walk away totally tanked. Oh, and *I* don't run from anybody—not from Firmus, not even from Bonosus himself, even though both were Roman emperors.¹ Believe it.

If anyone were to have *me* over for dinner and drinks, trust me, I'd be slaying cup after cup! What slaughter, what a *massacre* of wine you'd see, if someone were to call my sodden self to arms of that kind!

If He challenges me, I'll even go after (spare me, most holy Father!) *Bacchus* in a drinking contest! I'm a fighter; I'm tough; I'll compete against Comus, that wino!² I'm not afraid of gods and I'm not afraid of men. If you didn't know it, *I* am that famous Oenophile that all of Parthia awarded its wine prize to! Even Novellius Tricongius himself—the immortal glory, the ornament of Milan, who shocks Drunkenness herself with his drinking and sends her running away in terror, the darling of Silenus, of the Maenads, of the satyrs—even *he* takes a back seat to *me*.³

Therefore, if anyone's eager to beat everyone at drinking, he should take *me* as his teacher and learn the art of drinking. Phoenix was the teacher of Achilles? *I'm* the teacher of Iacchus, and no one before me has handed down such a cornucopia of art!

I Recant Nothing

At this point you might be saying, “What are you *doing*, you wine-soaked teacher!? Why is your Muse unraveling all your past work? What means this palinode, your words reversing course and issuing a recall of the dogmas you told us to respect with devout sobriety? These fighting words, they're not something a sane Muse would *say*! Your tongue, heavy with a lot of alcohol—it's flopping all out of control. The *sober* Muse is always self-consistent, she never sings a dissonant song off-key. You've been extolling a moderate intake and modest dinners and you've been teaching us to make sobriety the

guiding principle of our lives. Now you're saying, 'I'm dying to enter a drinking contest! Step right up if you're prepared to walk away drunk!' Without any provocation, you're challenging random people and you don't think there will ever be a match for you. You sound like a blowhard, too. But if bragging is always regarded as disgraceful, then what explains the nerve with which you're bragging now, you arrogant Thraso?"⁴

I'm not doing this unthinkingly. I'm not recanting the rules I prescribed earlier and my Muse isn't unraveling all my past work, either. A man *should* get to brag in the art he knows; every expert *should* pride himself on his art!

- It was just and right for Cicero, the lawyer, to be conceited about his powers of public speaking; he was the supreme glory of the Roman forum!
- His medicines let Hippocrates carry his head high, and it's no false applause that he claims for his art.
- Why shouldn't the great Apelles brag, seeing how his masterful hand outpainted one artist after another?
- Hesiod extols himself for the impressive art by which he taught us how to till fields.
- Attorneys puff with pride because of their art;
- the poet Ovid prided himself on his art.

In light of all that, will I really be a blowhard braggart if I preen about the very art I'm best at? By what right should *I* be denied universal rights? Others got to do it, so why not me?

Sobriety Is Still Best

I'm not telling you to go quit the moderate lifestyle so you can justly enlist as a worshipper of insane Drunkenness. You've heard the ideas that seem best to my way of thinking; *they're* what you should remember, *they're* what you should keep doggedly repeating:

- You should never drink more than your body requires,⁵ and
- You should have a healthy respect for sobriety.

. . . but the Pressure Can Be Overwhelming

But what're you going to do if someone's forcing you to have a drink when you don't want to? First he'll say, "please?," then promise a

prize alongside terrifying threats—often even obnoxiously pointing a sword at you (that’s the custom among our own drunken hillbillies—our “Centaurs”—nowadays)—while speaking his smooth words. With someone like that, you’d rather settle the point with sabers, and even getting nicked would be better than the nectar.

What’re you going to do every time you’re having dinner with gentlemen who are having drink after drink, a little too freely? Are you going to flatter your way out of playing along? But that’d be terrible manners!

It’ll often be the case that the status, reputation, and standing of the person offering you a glass of wine is so great that you *can’t* say no. You don’t want to make enemies of them—they’re equally capable of helping or hurting you—but you also shouldn’t be impressed with their claiming that “cows and camels can’t beat *my* drinking record!,” because cows are doing the right thing and camels the proper thing: they’re acting as their instincts direct them, because of course they lack reason. And if cows *did* have the gift of reason, they’d easily be going one-for-one with a man; so would jackasses, slow as they are. But they don’t drink *wine*, which keeps stimulating drinking. Tell me: when drinking plain water, who doesn’t find their thirst quickly satisfied?

Peer Pressure: When to Expect and How to Recognize It

Answer me this, too: how often does a crowd of guests show up at a party with a bottle of first-rate wine and put pressure on someone who’s not into it? It’s not just

- every time you’re on the road and someone hosts you, or
- every time you’re traveling on company business,

that we find ourselves getting told to drink when we aren’t into it—and when we’re not into it, the stuff we’re forced to endure is endless! At every meal there’s a drinking contest and every single time, everywhere, the wine causes fight after fight.

Seriously, what dinner, what lunch, *doesn’t* have these kinds of combat? What meal skips alcohol chugging? (Honest question!) Nowadays, every inn is bubbling over with excessive drinking; the world’s soaked in the floodwaters of the vine. No time in *centuries* has been as wine-addled as ours. You can go far these days if you can just stay sober:

- GUY #1's toasting, "A drink to our friendship!"
- GUY #2, "Here's to getting to know you!"
- GUY #3's saying, "Dude! you can't say no to just one, that'd be rude; c'mon, have one!"
- GUY #4's saying the same thing, and
- GUY #5'll have a reason that "Seriously, you *can't* refuse!"

Unless you answer by playing along and enduring these guys' drinks, you'd think you actually deserve their criticism.

Oh, and all of that's just the warm-up for the battle proper. Here comes the wine that someday, somehow, you'd have to stomach.

A Typical Drinking Game

Picture this:

- GUY #1's going again; he's drinking a second time because the turns have gotten reversed (a lucky roll of the dice is responsible for this little kindness).
- GUY #2 wants to get to know you better, so he keeps proposing toast after toast to you, and *clearly*
- THE TOUGH GUYS who're next won't let themselves be disrespected! Seriously, how could they?
- Up bellies THIS SOLDIER to your table. He's got glittering gems sparkling all over his fingers, a shaved head, a slitted doublet, scars everywhere, and a scary goatee on his face.
 - If you've got the guts, decline the drinks he gives you: he'll smash the glass on your disrespectful head!
 - If you do match him one for one, your prowess ticks him off—so that now, poor guy, you're *really* holding a tiger by the tail!

So, would you rather avoid others and eat by yourself, even though you like hanging out with other people in restaurants? Well, dining solo's going to cost you more, and as one who eats alone, you'll always be a more troublesome houseguest.

That's Why You Need My Art!

For all those reasons, do you think you *don't* need a truly amazing art to ensure you don't fall in that kind of combat? If you—a raw recruit—do down drinks at random from one and all and keep your head sober, you'll be awesome. And the guy who passes the techniques on

to you—wouldn't you agree he's a real teacher? Or is it all puffery, a worthless and bogus art he's hawking?

Millions would pay a fortune for the art I'm talking about, but schools that offer the art of drinking are hard to find. For practically nothing, *you* can master the precepts; you can trust your teacher, and the precepts will be weapons when you drink.

Even if you never use it, what's the disadvantage to owning a weapon? What's the harm in having missiles at the ready? There'll come a time when you'll need wine-weapons, and without a sword by your side, what are you going to draw? You see how soldiers go around armed at all times, and though they're carrying weapons, they don't always fire them.

All this means you must pay close and careful attention, now that you're getting curious about enlisting in my services.



The Trick to Winning Drinking Games

REALIZE IT'S A TWO-FRONT WAR

First things first. Whether it was chance or calculated strategy that's brought you to a bash, and it's now incumbent on you (as the ancient law dictates) to either drink or leave; and whether it's all night you have to spend with alcohol, or a daytime party you have to get through with wine all around you—if you're smart, then make a point, above all, *of planning ahead*. You'll always be waging a *two*-front battle against *two* drinkers when the nectar's poured, the wine's bubbling, and the competition's on:

- The *first* is the guy challenging you to take drinks.
- The *other* is the guy you'll be handing empty cups back to.
- The *first* will be firing weapons at you (by his drinking);
- The *second* will be keeping track of the weapons you bat down (as you're drinking).

Don't think about entering a Falernian contest against more than that. Don't go getting bold and take them on. Hercules wouldn't test the strength of two;⁶ don't go being braver than the son of Jupiter!

CHOOSE A VICTIM AND GO BUCK WILD

Scan the crowd and pick someone out. A mark, some jerk you can unload all your ammo into. While he's battling with the throat of an Achilles, attack him with the missiles your full jug of Bacchus'll keep

giving you. Him alone—just him—you’ll be firing at nonstop. He’s your enemy and he alone should be the target of your strikes. If your fist knocks a guy like that out, you’ll be a champion prizefighter; people will hail you for your skill, because

- The elite warrior Hector brought Achilles greater glory than the thousand other Trojans he slew; and
- Hector himself, scion of Priam, focused not on besting random Greeks but on mowing down each of their heroic leaders. Scorning a Thersites, Hector forever kept his warhorses trained on daring Patrocluses.

Also, don’t dream of beating the whole group: a one-on-many fight is risky. Forces divided go wobbly against superior numbers, whereas collected, their strength is never weak. If you’re drinking against more than one person, the drinks you assign won’t fill anyone up; no, *you’ll* fill up on lots of drinks, and fast. Therefore, see to it that the drinks you assign assail just one guy:

- If you beat him, you can go buck wild on a crowd, and
- if you fail and fall in the contest, then it’s to your glory to have fallen to the hand of a great Aeneas.

REMEMBER AND ENFORCE THE TALLY!

That said, to guarantee that the victory you’re craving covers you in glory, do the following when you’re drinking. It’ll make you happy and it’ll make you a winner:

- *Remember* what you’re *taking* and what you’re *giving* each person to drink, so that each person matches you one-for-one. No excuses.
- *Don’t* spot your friend a drink or two and *don’t* give them a free pass; *do* exact the wine they owe you. Nag and pester them, because
 - Our art is *not* the power to empty a huge glass.
 - Our art is *not* the power to stomach whole bottles.
 - Our art’s trick lies *not* in drying out one glass after another or in steeling your nerves against a bottomless lake of wine, not even if your drinking prowess can match Bonosus of Rome, not even if you can put Firmus in the infirmary.⁷

The trick to the art of drinking, its supreme virtue, is this: making sure your opponent matches you drink-for-drink each and every time.

PAY CLOSE ATTENTION!

You need to stay focused when you’re drinking. It’s even better to have the eyes of Argus, so you can keep an eye on what drinks you’re

assigning each person and make sure your friend's running the same race you are. I'm speaking from experience: *nobody* tells the truth when they're drinking, and if you aren't careful, you'll get cheated over and over. You'd sooner see white crows and flying turtles and black feathers on a swan than a friend who's truthful about their drinking, who doesn't cheat the tally of what they owe. Trust me: *I—am—an—expert!*

Liars aren't the only ones who'd better have a good memory. It's far more important for hardcore drinkers to possess strong powers of recall. Accordingly, don't give your mind any chance to forget: *loudly* lift each glass of tricky Falernian you drink!

HOLD THEIR FEET TO THE FIRE

Verbally force your friend to match you. Badger them:

"Dude, I went, it's your turn. Dude, I went, it's your turn! These cups are waiting for you to dry them out. What's taking this glass so long, huh? What about the one you're holding?"

If they're slow to comply, keep pestering them. Even if their memory's awesome, remind them about the alcohol:

"*Which* huge decanter, exactly, is the one you're always challenging people to? *Which* is the one your greedy throat pounds drink after drink from . . . ?"

You're aiming to dethrone a guy by offering him alcohol, so if you don't do all you can to *ensure* he drinks his drinks when it's his turn, then of you two, the one who doesn't imbibe the waters of Lethe will be the drinking champion! The one who insists on *answers* to his nectar, instead of entrusting his drinks to the fickle winds—he walks away the victor.

With my own eyes, I've seen many in a drinking fray face a guzzler whose prowess they were no match for. Why did they hit their limit of wine and drinking before others did? *Because they didn't pay attention to how much alcohol they'd been sucking down.* It's because I've respected this rule and habit and practice that I've vanquished a foe and taken plunder home in victory time and again. You must respect it too in your drinking. You'll walk away the victor and you'll swear my *Art* is the real deal.

NURSE YOUR DRINKS

Watch out you don't get reckless. Don't be like that idiot Protesilaus, running out ahead of the other Greek warriors. Make haste slowly in drinking your bubbling wine, or else you'll suffer a hasty downfall and

it won't be because some enemy's beaten you. *You* stay fresh and harass the weary! Be dead last to enter the battle: anybody can beat the weary. Trust me, Bacchus isn't a blitzkrieg; *slow* alcohol wins His fray, gradually. Don't you see how kids pass out all of a sudden, their brains switching off, every time they're all gung-ho and recklessly chugging Falernian (which isn't supposed to be rushed!) and chasing each round with another and another? It's almost as if victory consisted entirely of drinking fast and getting *yourself*, not the others, drunk!

In wars where real blood is shed, haste is often profitable. That art lets a leader catch men off guard or massacre them unprepared in a surprise attack. *Wine* combat, though, is settled only by sloth and delay. A person funneling glass after glass into their greedy mouth is mostly interested in getting a laugh out of everyone. And so, if you do drink slowly as I advise, you'll swear this poem of mine is the real deal.

If you do see a person pounding drinks, meet them with one Falernian after another, because alcohol coming thick and fast makes them twice as easy to beat. It's no trouble at all to drown people like that in their drinks; they sink themselves by their own awesomeness. They're like the untrained soldier who goes stupidly charging at the enemy, challenging one and all without backup. He and his bare sword and white shield are a lightweight, a nobody, so he falls, beaten by the enemy, and has only himself to blame.

To avoid that outcome, it's essential to make haste slowly. You have to *nurse* your wine with circumspect lips. Don't gulp wine or funnel a drink or chug alcohol in big gulps. Drunkenness overwhelms people who drink fast like that. She makes them throw up in disgrace. She makes them into clowns.

Drain a stein by taking tiny sips, gradually; *reckless* guys can gulp their wine. You be fine with ceding the early wins to them and let Celtic hearts wage and win the first skirmish. The *final* glory, the *victory*, shall be yours; just *look ahead* when you enter the war, and your hand will be invincible!

EAT SOMETHING FIRST

Another thing: Don't skip lunch and get drinks when your tongue's been fasting, and don't drink wine when your stomach's empty and rumbling. If you don't avoid doing that, you'll fill up on alcohol quicker than the person you're trying to beat.

Make sure to load your stomach up first. Give it the tasty ballast of a good meal and hence lay the foundation for drinking. Take your time eating, even if one or two people are pressuring you. Tell 'em, "I'm not completely full yet." Your opponent will get tired of waiting

as you dawdle over lunch; he'll ask who's ready to face him in round one. Meanwhile, a nice desire to drink will come to you—if you get a good lunch before consuming alcohol.

ATTACK IN FULL FURY!

And now, attack him by surprise! Grab goblets for him to drink and use flattery to get him interested. If you find him amenable and into drinking wine, carry on down that road. You go first and don't allow him a single step backward: he could use it to distract you from your course. Have glass follow glass upon glass! Have stein chasers for each round! Get huge bowls swapped in for bottles! No stopping, no rest, no no! Like a hailstorm, pour drink after drink down his throat! Give it all you've got!

RECOGNIZE SIGNS THAT TRIUMPH IS NEAR

And now you're hanging on to Proteus! Tighten the grip of his handcuffs; you don't want him getting a chance to recover. Make sure that going forward, *nobody* comes challenging *you*! And when you see the following signs, use full bottles to put the pressure on. When he's

- already getting sick of it,
- saying the Falernian's making his stomach turn and an intense flush is breaking out on his face,
- shouting abuse at the waiters nearby for giving him bigger drinks than others,
- slurring his speech and leaving words unfinished,
- sick and repeatedly asking the barmaids for help,
- constantly slurping his drink,
- spitting the wine out,
- dribbling alcohol from his wet mouth, and
- cleverly dumping his Falernian out (secretly or openly):

those are the signs of a drinker on the ropes! The flame is out; his earlier gung-ho attitude's lost its steam. Give him alcohol, pressure him! He's ready to cry uncle.



How to Play Defense

If someone *does* get the jump on you, though, and he's besieging you, pressuring you, if he's already got you alcohol-surrounded—piling glass upon glass, chasing one round with another and then doubling

them up with yet more rounds—if he’s not leaving you any chance to catch your breath or an opportunity to resist, then here’s how to act, here’s what to do: thwart your bitter foe’s momentum, tack in a harder direction, and deprive the winner of the coveted alcohol trophy, or at least have your war declared a stalemate and go home.

Here’s what to do, therefore, every time you’ve entered a battle you’re no match for and lots of drinks are looming at your door: *match him soft and slowly*. Don’t refuse rounds when they’re offered to you, but trust me, *he’ll* rush *his*, high on his masculinity.

Meanwhile, you should ask the waiter for a big serving bowl the two of you can take turns drinking from. If he complains and rejects the Falernian he’s offered and tells you that you obviously owe him a bunch and you have to pay those debts of wine he’s taken first and you owe it to him to take a bigger drink when it’s your turn, then say:

“Look at all these drinks I’ve been taking from you till now. They were full to the top and I was happy to drink them eagerly. You’re upset, though, about this one serving bowl—my first—that modesty alone told me to bring you? If I *weren’t* showing you respect now that it’s my turn, I’d be rude—more boorish than the Scythians, more barbarous than the Getae.⁸ I’m going to drink the drinks I still owe you to catch up—all of ’em, just as eagerly as before.”

He won’t be so impolite or such a hick that he’d be able to turn down your wine like that!

And, by accepting the wine, he’s already knocked off course, his sails diverted from the win he was headed for. Boom! You’ve bought yourself some time and room to pay the debts he’s harassing you to pay him, *and* there’s no fear you’ll get decimated by a decanter you’ve rushed through and blitzed by its alcohol. There are *two* drinks he has to drink before you go: *first* the one you’ve assigned him, *then* the one he wants to toast to you. In between, plain luck will give you a chance

- to protect your first place by drinking, and soon,
- to add bonus prizes to your medal, and soon,
- to face another opportunity for a third round of wine.

By *this* method—no other—you’ll make a clean getaway when you’re oppressed by Lyaeus, if you follow it diligently. These rules *will* bestow the champion cup on you! They’ve certainly brought me *my* victorious name.⁹

I Wish I'd Had My Own Advice in the Days of My Youth!

Ah! How I *wish* Jupiter would give me back the years gone by!—downing huge quantities of wine the way I did in college, when the strength in my growing body was rock solid and time hadn't turned my muscles to ruin. Back then, my virile youth let me stomach wine better. Back then, I was always bringing trophies home from wine contests! If I'd been schooled in my own rules, had my art, and had a teacher like myself, I'd have destroyed *everyone* in alcohol-drinking. *Nobody* would've gotten in my path and walked away with impunity—doesn't matter whether he was a knight or a squire. I would've swallowed entire oceans, I would've drained lakes of wine and pools of alcohol dry if you'd offered it to me . . . !¹⁰



Make sure you're a *zealot* about remembering the rules I taught you earlier, because what you remember can help you. Soldiers always protect themselves with swords and shields; it's good to protect yourself with a sword and shield, too, so you can bat down wine's sudden shots and be ready to return fire at your enemy.

Further Advice

KEEP WINE AT HOME

At drinking time, always have an impressive bottle standing sentinel at your door (and don't go cheap on it); it'll serve as a shield. You won't really use it when you're combatting two people simultaneously, but if some third person comes and challenges you, then use your *straight* wine to overpower your challenger's *watered-down* wine. Bring *him* wine as he's assigning *you* wine to drink: draw your "blade" and *strike* the man, instantly, who'd like to strike you. That's how you'll scare him off, that's how one blade parries another, and that's how you have to knock one nail out with another!

CHOOSE YOUR GAME WISELY

You absolutely must make a point, too, of searing the following rule into your memory (it's no small thing): *do not accept any Falernian that's out of turn or comes out of nowhere and blindsides you*. Nobody can really prosecute a war on two fronts and nobody's good at drinking wine at home and out on the town. You can explain:

“There are lots of our other friends here, and I can’t take turns with everyone! I feel like you others cut some secret deal and you’re ganging up on me—conspiring to give me high-octane wine.”

Don’t take a single drink from them until you call their evil deal off. They cut it under the lying guise of friendship, hoping you alone will get hammered and crack them up with laughter.

“That’s why you ought to call the deal off!” (*you’re saying*). “I can see you guys conspired against me with high-octane wine” (*you should say*), “but I’m telling you, I’m no match for your guys’ strength. I’m not taking you all on in battle by myself. Only a moron would wage war against superior numbers. I have a different idea if you’re game: let’s drink in one big circle, ancient-Greek style.¹¹ It’s the only way I’m going to drink with you guys.”

DRINK SYMPOSIUM-STYLE

Drinking in that fashion—that is, with people bound by binding terms—you’ll have no trouble defending your position. That way, everybody gets tasked with one and the same assignment; everyone’s forced to stomach the same amount of alcohol. You won’t get discombobulated, first by this one guy, then by that other guy, and your shield won’t end up absorbing all their ammo. Think about it. If you’re on your own, how could you *not* succumb to the wine when you’ve been set up as the mark, the target, for everybody?

(On the other hand, if you’re looking to slow the next round down, if you’re looking to retard the whirling cups, then fling your goblet and its wine at the opposite side of the circle and hit the freshly uncorked bottles.)

Finally, every time you want to compete on a level Bacchus-field, you should always obey these rules:

- No cutting across,
- all drinking goes in order around the circle, and
- drinks can’t skip or go crosswise once in play.

Good Lord! I don’t know *any* way to drink that’s more fun or any wine more enjoyable than this. *This* is the one and only way good friends drink; it’s the way the good people of sodden Saxony drink their brewed Ceres¹² and thick liqueurs. (And, oh! Why *doesn’t* that region have wine? A people that worships watery beverages with such brotherly affection *deserves* wine, *deserves* the nectar of the gods!)

DON'T PLAY AGAINST RELATIVES

Although it's not superimportant, here's one more thing that, as your teacher, I really can't leave unsaid: *Just as you shouldn't take anything from a son-in-law, you should take just as little alcohol from a blood relative:* not even if he nags you, calls you rude, or says you have a heart of stone.

DON'T PLAY REFEREE IF A DISPUTE BREAKS OUT

A party forbids arguments and disputes, and free-flowing wine is no place for a court of law. Therefore, when a dispute does arise between two people, be very careful that you don't unthinkingly become the judge of wine. No one should be pronounced guilty on your testimony; you must never assign anybody wine in someone else's name. You see, such types always repay you with appropriate "gifts"—gifts sure to stack weight on top of the wine burden you've already had to shoulder.



Now for Real-World Experience!

I've laid out certain rules for drinking; they aren't too firm, but their power is impressive. You have to firm them up through constant experience; short of that, dogmas can't do a thing. When it comes to high-level arts, experience is more useful than the rules that are helpful in schools. Mastery of an art grows with experience; experience is what makes teachers teachers. Any person who has experience has a tremendous resource to call on. Experience makes any art you can think of more perfect. Who could possibly glorify it with the praise it deserves? Unless you duly firm up and hone your art with experience, you'll often fall down drunk and wallow on the filthy ground. It's happened to me. Sadly, on no few occasions I've seen all my arts fail me, landing me in the muck and mud and getting me stuck there.¹³ The reason I slipped is because I lacked *experience*: classroom lessons in the art of drinking obviously weren't enough all by themselves.

For that reason, if you're eager to benefit from my rules, you have to be knocking drinks back constantly. Habituate yourself to downing and holding a lot more alcohol so you won't get blitzed on three drinks. Take my advice and learn to drink wine *gradually*: six drinks today, ten tomorrow. Right now, you can handle a calf, but soon you'll be able to take on a bull, if you develop your tolerance by

specific steps. Don't use easy-drinking Falernian or watered-down stuff to master the basics; drink *strong* wines! If you can handle them, you'll also be able to handle the light-bodied wines that nestle and grow on the banks of the Neckar river.

And drink *now*, while the strength in your young body is virile and impressive and your knees work the way they're supposed to. Don't put off drinking contests to your slow-moving years. You're a soldier! The older you get, the more out of shape you'll be.

YOU CAN'T WIN EVERY TIME

I should add, though, that you won't be giving a bad name to my *Art* or the teacher who's been happily teaching you the rules, every time you get beaten in a drinking contest. You can't walk away the victor every time! You see, just as Mars is a dicey game to play, so too is Bacchus. Wine plays its favorites, too—though it can be hard to tell which:

- Hannibal was an expert in armaments and warfare, but he didn't always slay his enemies and carry off their armor in victory. That Phoenician didn't inevitably flatten Italy's generals beside Lake Trasimene's glassy waters, enjoying Mars' favor.

No matter how well versed you are in my *Art*, you shouldn't expect to be the winner always and forever, either.

... SO YOU MIGHT HAVE TO CHEAT

Moreover, when you do feel my *Art* and your powers failing you, you have to cheat to buttress the *Art's* weakness—although I really don't like nectar-cheating, because those who lie about wine also lie about their word of honor.

That said, if you see others relying on traps and cheating, then lay your own trap in drinking wine. Bacchus' laws allow us to fight cheating with cheating, exactly as Caesar's laws allow us to fight violence with violence:

- No one's embarrassed to swindle a swindler.
- A lying Cretan has to be assailed by fraud.¹⁴

What's to stop us from defeating a savage Lapith through cunning or spiking the wine to beat fierce Centaurs in a contest? Alexander the Great scorned a furtive victory, refusing to finish off enemy troops at night. *You*, however, shall take the words uttered by Coroebus of Troy as your motto. *You* shall regard stealing a victory as great and glorious. Spike the wine! *"Is it ruses or bravery when dealing with*

HOW TO CHEAT

You can have a thousand forms of deception. You can bribe the waiter with a few bucks in advance or woo him over to your side with secret promises:

- Have him mix up superstrong wines for everyone else but serve you yourself sober drinks—by secretly swapping the wine out for water.
- Have him bring you weak wine of average strength while the rest of the group is sucking down wine from an elderly vintage. Leave wines that show their great age to tough guys; if it's available, enthusiastically reach for *this* year's vintage.
- Is sweet wine on offer? Then you shall enjoy the sweet stuff at every opportunity (trust me, the sweet stuff doesn't make your thinking as drunk).
- That said, if the other competitors like this year's vintage, then secretly pour old wine into a new glass. If the misstep's detected, it'll be easily excused; the bartender's hand *does* make a lot of those mistakes . . .
- Make a point of getting up to go pee often. That'll buy you time for the wine you're supposed to drink to get bumped or knocked over, or a free pass, because your opponent forgets and finally overlooks it. (I've "taken" many drinks by skipping my turn like that.)

I won't mention other deceptions and traps and tricks that art lets you play on every drinker, but . . .

A Classic

If you're looking to play a neat trick on guests when you walk into a swinging party, then first

- Refuse every drink that's offered to you; say you're just not up to it.
- Act like you're in pain (making all the problems up). It's a good idea to look and act sick. You'd:

"totally love all this alcohol—so nice of you to offer!—but" *you* "just need a little time to get over this nasty cold first." *So, you* "have to stick to drinking what's been prescribed for my diet" *if you* "don't want to relapse and start all over again."

With these excuses, nobody's going to force you to have a drink unless their manners are as appalling as the cyclops in Homer's *Odyssey*.

Later, after the partygoers are a little tipsy from their first round of Bacchus, bring in some nice wine for them, and at a leisurely pace:

"My friends, I wouldn't want you to think I'm rude, so even though I'm not feeling so hot, I still want to toast this glass of bubbling Falernian to your health. It's a token of neighborly love."

That's how you gain admission to their drinking, with a toast like that, having finally dispensed with your "fever" and your problems. (You can use this trick to avoid Falernian completely, too, any time wine's disagreeing with your stomach.)

Sneak Out and Away

I've benefitted quite a bit from this next trick myself; in fact, I still use it all the time when I'm basically hammered. When I think I almost *want* to pass out, and my body's bloated and useless from round after round and my strength's all been spent on drinking and no hope for help is on the way—that's when I secretly stagger out of the sodden arena and escape the seething wine on faltering feet. Barely alive but saving myself from a mortal wound, I often snatch myself from the jaws of death like that, and at the same time, I rob my competitors of the coveted trophy, which they'd be carrying in triumph over me if I weren't getting out of there first.

Nothing's stopping you from following the example your teacher's set, and he wouldn't want you to feel ashamed of running off in secret. Don't you know about Demosthenes, the greatest orator in classical Athens (and his deed didn't go unpraised)? He wasn't ashamed of being called *Drop-shield*, since he who fights and runs away, lives to fight Bacchus' wars another day. You too ought to hightail it out of there before you do something stupid and end up as a funny story for the whole bar to laugh at.

The moral is, when you've been deprived of all power to win, the wine had better get your tired feet moving. That way, nobody'll brag about wounding you, and nobody'll be shouting, "Down he went!—a victim of the alcohol."



But what's the point in hammering away at you with childish ideas and all these different aids to sobriety? Why don't I just come out with a summary of my rules so you can always manage your drinking invincibly? Well, I will, and I won't keep you in suspense, son, since you do always drink without losing control.

THE AMETHYST

Legend has it that among the precious jewels of the East, there's a gemstone of a purple hue. It gets its famous name from its power: keeping Drunkenness (*Methe*) at bay and offering medicinal hangover prevention. Like the Greeks, the nations of Italy call it the *amethyst*, and it's a more desirable gemstone than the jewelry of Gyges.¹⁶ Purchase this stone at whatever price you find it! That ring should encircle your knuckle. If its nature doesn't lie, then such is the power in it that it shall be an anti-methyst for you when you drink. This jewel's believed to be the guardian of eternal sobriety and the enemy of Drunkenness (whose cult must not be joined!). It is the delight of the kings of sub-Saharan Africa and India. With it, they worship wine continuously, successfully, and headache-free.

CERTAIN FOODS YOU CAN EAT

Those denied this gemstone, however, because they cannot afford it, should search out drugs that offer a different kind of help. Many, many are the means we have for stimulating drinking, and the dinner table gives you many, many means to drive Drunkenness away:

- Radishes are a modest-priced medicine; eaten before alcohol, they dissipate Drunkenness.
- Raw cabbage—marjoram's enemy, and hostile to inferior vines—prevents excessive Drunkenness.
- Chives, too, shake off Drunkenness from those who taste it.
- Onions on an empty stomach keep Drunkenness at bay.
- You don't praise the taste of almonds for no reason (the bitter ones, not the sweet ones).
- There's merit in eating a nimble cow's roasted lung before drinking.
- Hazelnuts are just as effective (trust me).
- Dried figs can also protect sobriety, though unripe ones stimulate thirst.
- It's also proven beneficial to remember saffron, which can stop these problems when taken properly.
- Some even don't hesitate to nibble hemlock before alcohol, but it's just too dangerous. May "medicines" like that befall our enemies!

You'll do better with much simpler remedies:

- Do remember to block fiery Lyaeus with a drink of cold water (which is a good idea all on its own). If you've gotten drunk, it'll dissipate it (the coldness of the water overwhelms the fiery heat).
- And why would I want to show you drugs made from a swallow's beak, which prevent a hangover if you take them? *Don't* get addicted to putting purslane seeds under your tongue, and *don't* drink water from Clitor's spring.¹⁷
- Do remember to eat a good meal, one well-fortified with a variety of different seasonings, but don't wolf it down, my novice! (Spices are performance enhancers even for weak wines, so what kind of boost do you suppose they'll give a *strong* one?)

All the doctors disagree with me on this point, but I've learned from real-world experience that what I'm saying is only too true. Experience impresses me more than doctors do, since the only thing that makes doctors good is experience itself.



A Few Final Words of Advice

Here at the end, add the following rules to my earlier ones, and never skip them when you're drinking:

- Never enter a drinking contest against a woman, and don't compete against a drunk old woman.

The reason, you'll find, is that women who indulge are equipped with a breathtaking ability to hold their liquor. They put Bacchus Himself to shame when they drink wine. You could well compare them to Amazons in their audacity to take on any and every man who comes along. Even if you do outdrink them, the victory won't win you any praise, or certainly not enough of it. Seriously, no weak woman's going to bring you a great and glorious reputation by your beating her in a drinking contest; whereas if *you* get beaten, you'll be a joke to everyone—because you, a *man*, got defeated by a weakling. Just so:

- Penthesilea, the Amazon maiden, didn't win Achilles a whole lot of glory.
- Aeneas was smarter; he refused to cut the throat of Helen of Troy—and she was the reason his country was destroyed.

In a battle like that, my novice, it's better to follow the example of Venus' son, Aeneas, than the wrathful Achilles.

One more thing. Would you like to avoid looking like an idiot over and over and the problems you'll repeatedly have to deal with when you're drinking? Then make sure you don't leave home still drunk, not till you've slept off the Falernian and sobered up.

Take everything I've been saying, my boy, as the basics of drinking. If you master them, I'll give you harder ones before long. Bacchus won't allow me to reveal the rest, not the stuff you can't handle now—it's meant only for the ears of old men, not boys.



Coda: Take This Book in the Spirit It's Intended

I've been acting juvenile in this silly poem of mine, and you should read it in the spirit it's obviously written in. I decided it would be fun to joke around lightheartedly, so you too ought to decide that my poem is just a joke, please. I don't *think* I'll have to fear the natives of Romania or the Black Sea's icebergs because of it.¹⁸ I didn't teach strategies for gaslighting girls or tricks to seduce another guy's wife.¹⁹ My *Art* doesn't celebrate the wicked crime of violating bedrooms and it doesn't celebrate pornographic escapades. It doesn't teach kissing, apart from the innocent kisses that ought to be gently planted on brimming bottles of Lyaeus. There's nothing erotic, there's no illicit sex in my poem. My *Muse* has no shocking story to tell. I've displayed *sober* binges, the *responsible* use of Bacchus, and, yes, occasionally the fun of *above-board* drinking contests. The point is, I shouldn't be condemned unfairly. I don't approve of drunkenness or getting hammered. They're wrong.

You also shouldn't brand me an alcoholic on the basis of my wine-soaked poem. My *Muse* is drunk, but my *life* is sober! And that I prefer drinking wine to cold water—who, I ask you seriously, would want to hold that against me?

. . . and a Curse on Those Who Won't

As for you out there, though, you hater who have no qualms about criticizing my *Art* and shredding it in your molars: I hereby wish you no problems, no haunting regrets worse than those the poet Ovid recounts in his *Ibis*, so long as Iacchus deigns never to smile graciously upon you and grant you the enjoyment of good wine even once in

your life.

- May the Bacchus you drink with that stupid, obscene mouth of yours prove joyless and unfun, you bastard!
- May you meet with no drink of nectar when you're thirsty!
- May your thirst be quenched with skunky wine and gunky lees!
- May you never taste a smooth wine, never taste sweet Falernian!
- May you drink rancid wines! May you drink moldy wines!
- Finally, when you see good friends drinking, smiling and having fun all day, then may you sit all by yourself, despised, sullen, and gnashing your teeth, while jealous thirst torments your lips!
- In the end, may Maenads and satyrs mutilate and tear you apart horribly, as the women of Thebes did to Pentheus!
- And may your scattered bones find no repose in a tomb—all because your raving mouth criticized my lighthearted jokes.

Conclusion

The fun is done! Give your professor wine, kids, that's all I ask of you; and whenever you're practicing my *Art* and the wine's a-flowing, my students, please spare a thought for me.

THE END



LIBER III

Hactenus ornatae frugalia pocula vitae

diximus, et laudes, sobria vita, tuas.

Addidimus foedos—turpissima monstra—bibones
et mala damnosae non numeranda Methes.

5Nunc tua, Bacche, canam, modo des in carmina vires,
proelia largifluo perficienda mero,
invictasque acies et pectora nescia mergi
quamlibet immodicis debilitata cadis.

Mitte, pater, caput huc, placataque cornua vertas
10et des ingenio vela secunda meo.

Da generosa prius sitibundis vina Camenis:
post potum, melius carmina mille fluent.

Arma manu capias animisque virilibus audax

pugnae, tiro rudis, me duce bella subi!

15Pro galea, capiti molles impone coronas;
stillet odoratae rore capillus aquae.

Amphora sit thorax, clipeus sit vasta capedo,
sit tibi pro rigido vitreus ense calix.

Pro funda cyathum, graciles pro cuspide thyrsos
20sume, tubae subeat sicca lagoena vicem.

Mavortis miles Vulcania comparet arma;
Bacchi militiam talia tela decent.

Sic libet atque iuvat vini certamen inire
claraque suffuso ferre tropaea mero.

25Non aliis telis Orientem vicit et Indos
Bacchus; non aliis omnia regna domat.

Ergo cui est virtus animusque in pectore praesens,
si quem vina iuvant et sitis ardor habet,
adsit, et impigris attollat pocula palmis;
30victorem pugnae praemia digna manent.

Nemo velit mecum tali sudare palaestra

qui non actutum potus abire cupit.

Nec quemquam fugio, non ipsum, crede, Bonosum,
non Firmum, quamvis Caesar uterque fuit.
35Si quis nos saltem dapibusque meroque benigne
acciperet, leto pocula multa darem.
Quas strages vini, quam possis cernere cladem,
talìa nos bibulos si quis ad arma vocet!
Si me irritarit, etiam in certamina Bacchum
40(parce, pater, nobis, ter venerande!) petam.
Audeo vinoso pugnax contendere Como;
non superos timeo, non homines timeo.
Si nescis, ego sum memorabilis ille Philoenus
cui vini palmam Parthia tota dedit.
45Nobis cedit et ipse Tricongius ille Novellus,
perpetua Insubriae fama decusque suae,
quem stupet ipsa Methe fugiensque timensque bibentem,
quem Silenus amat, Maenades et satyri.
Artem igitur discat me praeceptore bibendi,
50si quis potando vincere quosque cupit.
Pelidae Phoenix, ego sum praeceptor Iacchi;
hanc nullus prae me tradidit artis opem.

Dixeris hic forsàn, “Quid agis, vinose magister?

Cur tua praeteritum Musa retexit opus?
55Cur tua nunc versis revocat palinodia verbis
dogmata iussa pia sobrietate coli?
Non sunt haec sanae pugnancia dicta Camenae;
sic titubat largo lingua gravata mero.
Sobria perpetuo constat sibi Musa, nec unquam
60dissona discordi carmina voce canit.
Laudas astrictae frugalia pocula mensae,
et vitam institui sobrietate doces.
Nunc inquis ‘vini certamen inire laboro,
actutum veniat potus abire volens.’
65Quemlibet ultro etiam iactanti voce lacessis,
atque parem censes non tibi posse dari.
Quod si cuncta sui iactantia turpis habetur,
qua nunc te iactas fronte, superbe Thraso?”
Non ego scripta prius temere praecepta recanto,
70nec mea praeteritum Musa retexit opus.
Quam norit, quivis illa se iactet in arte;
quisque sibi placeat doctus in arte sua.
Iure superbivit fandi virtute patronus
Arpinas, Latii gloria summa fori.
75Hippocrati iustas tollunt medicamina cristas,

nec falsam laudem vindicat arte sibi.
Cur non eximius semet iactaret Apelles,
cum plures docta vicerit ipse manu?
Ascræus vates merita se praedicat arte,
80qua docuit quo sint rura colenda modo.
Arte sua turget iuris legumque peritus;
arte sua placuit Naso poeta sibi.
Ergo mei fuero vanus iactator honoris,
si illa qua valeo glorior arte mea?
85Quonam iure mihi communia iura negentur?
hoc aliis licuit; cur minus ergo mihi?

Non ego te iubeo frugalem ponere vitam,
cultor ut insanae iure probere Methes.
Optima quae visa est nostrae sententia menti
90audisti; hanc animo, hanc mordicus ore tene:
numquam plura bibas quam corporis exigit usus,
et frugi curam sobrietatis habe.

Sed quid ages, si quis nolentem ad pocula coget
nunc prece, nunc precio terrificisque minis,
95crebro etiam gladiis (quo nunc sunt more bibaces
Centauri) trucibus blandiloquisque logis?
Cum tali, potius malis contendere ferro,
gratius atque tibi nectare vulnus erit.
Quid facies quotiens inter cenabis honestos
100pocula qui paulo liberiora bibunt?
Talibus obsequio facili servire negabis?
Esset inhumani pectoris illud opus.
Saepe propinantum pretium nomenque decusque
maius erit quam quod spernere vina decet.
105Ne cupias illos inimicos sumere, iuxta
qui prodesse tibi quique nocere queunt,
sed nec te moveat quod vaccas atque camelos
dicunt potandi non superare modum.
Recte equidem vaccae faciunt belleque cameli,
110ut fert ingenium; nam ratione carent.
Qua si imbuta foret, mox responderet honesto
vacca viro; faceret tardus asellus idem.
Sed nec vina bibunt, irritamenta bibendi;
quis (dic) non liquida mox satiatur aqua?

115Dic, quot in hospitibus invitum saepe lacescunt
convivae primis advena turba cadis?
Longinquis quotiens hospes iactaris in oris,

extera seu quotiens ad loca missus adis,
saepeius inviti casu potare iubemur:

120cogimur inviti qualia multa pati!
Omnibus in mensis vino certatur, et omni
vina loco passim proelia multa movent.
Quaenam cena caret tali, quae prandia pugna?
Sorbitione meri quae (rogo) mensa caret?

125Cuncta supervacuo nunc diversoria potu
fervent; vitifluo flumine cuncta madent.
Nulla fuit multis saeculis vinosior aetas;
magna potes si nunc sobrius esse potes:
Alter amicitiae cyathum tibi praebibit, alter
130notitiam tecum potor inire cupit,
tertius, "heus, primum poteris haud spernere vitrum;
incivile foret; carpe libenter!" ait.

Quartus idem loquitur; causam quoque quintus habebit,
quae tibi stat nullo reicienda modo.
135Hos nisi pocula ferens contra reverenter honestes,
probro censeris id tibi iure dari.
Atque haec sunt iustae tantum praeludia pugnae;
essent haec aliquo vina ferenda modo.

Ecce bibens iterum verso redit ordine primus

140(hospitii hoc veteris tessera grata facit).
Notitiam melius vult confirmare secundus;
hinc crebros calices praebibit ille tibi.
Scilicet haud dura patientur fronte sequentes
se sperni! Quanam dic ratione, precor?
145Accumbit mensae quidam torquatus eidem,
multa cui in digitis lucida gemma micat,
cui caput est rasum, vestis dissecta, cicatrix
plurima, et hircinis frons truculenta pilis.
Huius si quid habes animi, data vina recusa:
150incutiet capiti pocula sprete tuo.
Si semel atque iterum respondes, provocat illum
sedulitas; retines iam, miser, aure lupum.
Vis alios vitare, cibum vis sumere solus,
cum te cum reliquis publica tecta foveant?
155Maiori sumptu solus cenabis, et omni
munophago semper durior hospes eris.

Quare, ne tali possis succumbere pugna,

arte pereximia non opus esse putas?
Si rudis a cunctis promiscua pocula sorbes,
160sobria si retines pectora, fortis eris.

Haec qui tradiderit tibi, non erit ille magister?
Aut iactat stolidam futilis artis opem?
Hanc sibi complures artem grandi aere pararent,
artem potandi sed schola rara docet.
165Nosse potes minimo fidi praecepta magistri,
quae tibi potanti cupidis instar erunt.
Ut numquam utaris, quid obest tamen arma parasse,
sive quid in promptu tela tenere nocet?
Adveniet tempus vinosa quod exigit arma;
170quem stringes si non ad femur ensis erit?
Conspicis ut duris semper stet miles in armis,
et tamen haud semper, qui gerit arma, ferit.
Ergo animos opus est dociles attendere, nostrae
qui dare militiae nomina forte cupis.



175Principio seu te perduxit ad orgia casus,
seu ratio certis subdita consiliis,
et tibi pro veteri est abeundum aut lege bibendum,
aut nox in multo pervigilanda mero,
aut agitanda die vino convivia largo,
180si sapis, imprimis providus esse stude.
Anceps cum bibulis tibi pugna gerenda duobus
certanti infuso nectare semper erit.
Primus erit tibi qui spumantia vina propinat;
alter erit cui tu pocula sicca dabis.
185Primus te contra potans feret arma, secundus
quae tu depellis sentiet arma, bibax.
Nec plures tecum certamen inire Falerni
optes audaci sustineasque manu:
Noluit Alcides vires temptare duorum;
190fortior Alcida ne velis esse Iovis.

Unum aliquem insignem numero tibi delige ab omni,
quem tua configant spicula cuncta trucem.
Hunc pete Achilleo pignantem gutture, Bacchi
telis quae crebro plena lagoena dabit.
195Hunc unum, hunc solum semper iaculaberis hostem;
ictus excipiat solus et ille tuos.
Pugnasti magna victor laudabilis arte,
talem prostravit si tua dextra virum.
Plus dedit Aeacidæ laudis fortissimus Hector,
200quam reliqui caesi mille dedere Phryges,

vincere nec vulgo Danaos Priameius heros,
sed studuit magnos sternere quosque duces.
Semper in audaces spreto Thersite Patroclus
intentos habuit belliger Hector equos.
205Nec tibi sperandum est cunctos te vincere posse;
pugna est unius non bene firma manus.
Invalidae fiunt divisae ad plurima vires;
collectae, numquam debile robur habent.
Si bibis ad plures, replent tua pocula nullum,
210sed te replebunt pocula multa cito.
Fac itaque oppugnent unum tua pocula solum,
quo victo, potis es vulgus adire ferox,
aut, si succumbis victus certamine, magni
clarius Aeneae succubuisse manu est.

215Te tamen ut cupita laetum victoria laude
afficiat, potans sic age, victor eris:
Esto memor quae cuique feras, quae cuique propines,
ut tibi par prompto reddat ab ore pari.
Nullos dissimula cyathos nec parce sodali;
220exige multiplici debita vina prece.
Non est ars pateras posse evacuare capaces,
non est ars plenos posse vorare cados,
non est artis opus phialas siccare frequentes
et vastos vini non trepidare lacus,
225non si Romanum potando aequare Bonosum,
non si etiam Firmo firmior esse queas.
Hoc erit artis opus, virtus haec summa, bibendi:
ut tibi compotor reddat ubique vicem.

Hic decet attentum te pectus habere bibentem;
230hic oculos Argi praestat habere nimis,
tu quibus observes quae pocula cuique propines,
et quo tu graderis calle, sodalis eat.
Expertus dico; nemo est potando fidelis;
ni fueris cautus, decipiere crebro.
235Ante potes niveos coracas volucresque chelonas
et cygni plumas ante videre nigras
quam fidum potu, experto mihi crede, sodalem,
debita mensurae qui sine fraude bibat.
Non modo mendacem memorem decet esse, bibacem
240multo plus memori mente valere decet.
Quare nulla tuam capiant oblivia mentem:
praebibe non tacita vana Falerna manu.

Ad respondendum verbis compelle sodalem,
saepius appellans, “heus, mihi redde vicem!
245Heus, mihi redde vicem; siccanda haec pocula restant;
cur, precor, hoc vitrum cessat? et iste calix?”
Ad respondendum cunctantis saepius aurem
velle; meri memorem quamlibet ipse mone.
“Quonam saepe alios pleno cratere lacesis?
250Quo sorbes avida pocula plura gula?”
Si non das operam bibat ut data vina vicissim
quem cupis oblato deposuisse mero,
qui non Lethaei potarit gurgitis undas,
ille mihi princeps sorbitionis erit.
255Qui non mobilibus tradit sua pocula ventis,
sed responsa petit nectare, victor abit.
Expertus multos bibuli virtute duelli
vidi potores non habuisse pares.
Cur sunt ante alios vino potuque repleti?
260Exhausti curam non habuere meri.
Huius ego observans praecepti et moris et usus
praedam de victo saepius hoste tuli.
Hoc et tu potans observa, et victor abibis,
et dices artem pondus habere meam.

265Praeceptis esse cave, stolidi neque Protesilai
ante alios Danaos aemulus esse velis,
sed lente propera spumantia vina bibendo,
aut prope nullo victus ab hoste cades.
Ipse recens fessis incumbe, novissimus exi
270in pugnam; fessos vincere quisque potest.
Crede mihi, non sunt Bacchi properanda duella,
sed sensim tardo perficienda mero.
Nonne vides iuvenes ferventi mente feroces,
ut subito extincto pectoris igne iacent,
275dum temere properant non festinanda Falerna,
et cumulant haustus haustibus usque novis?
—cuncta quasi in celeri staret victoria potu,
quo te, non alios, ebrius ipse gravas!
Sanguineis bellis saepe est properantia lucro,
280qua dux incautos obruit arte viros
atque improvise prosternit Marte quietos,
at vinosa pigra stat nisi pugna mora.
Qui subitos avido calices ingurgitat ore,
ridiculus primum hic omnibus esse cupit.
285Ergo meo monitu potando lentius, ipse

carminibus dices pondus inesse meis.
Quem properare vides, crebro huic occurre Falerno:
bis victu facilis fit properante mero.
Haud labor est ullus tales submergere potu:
290 ipsi se mergunt sedulitate sua,
sicut miles iners temere procurrit in hostes
et fultus nulla quemque lacessit ope,
ense levis nudo parmaque inglorius alba:
ille sua culpa victus ab hoste cadit.
295 Quod tibi ne eveniat, lente properare necesse est
et circumspectis lambere vina labris.
Sed neque vina vora, nec avariteringere potum,
nec crebro magnis haustibus inde merum.
Obruit ebrietas ita festinata bibentem
300 et vomitu turpem ridiculumque facit.
Haustibus evacua carchesia magna pusillis
paulatim; audaces vina vorare sine.
Ipse lubens primos illis concede triumphos
et primam pugnam Celtica corda gerant.
305 Ultima laus tua sit, tua sit victoria; tantum
providus invicta consere bella manu.

Nec male pransus adiieiuna pocula lingua,
nec vinum vacuo ventre crepante bibe.
Quod nisi vitâris, citius repleberis illo
310 quem conabaristu superare, mero.
Fac oneres ventrem grata dapis ante saburra
et fundamentum potibus ante iace.
Indulge dapibus, licet urgeat unus et alter.
Dic, "Nondum plene sum satur ipse cibo."
315 Non feret ille moras nec prandia lenta vorantem,
sed quaeret cuinam pocula prima feret.
Interea veniet tibi grata cupido bibendi,
ante merum sumptum si bene pransus eris.

Hinc improvisum sumptis invade cypellis,
320 dulcia quae blanda reddita voce bibat.
Quem si compereris ad vina bibenda lubentem,
et facilem, ulterius, qua via ducit, eas.
Praeveniens semper nullum concede regressum,
quo te de cursu detrahat ille tuo.
325 Succedant calici calices, carchesia trullis,
inque locum subeat vasta capedo cadi.
Nec mora, nec requies, sed crebrae grandinis instar
ingere non pigra pocula multa manu.

Protea iam retines; constringe tenacia vincla,

330ne requiescendi possit habere locum.

Effice ne posthac quisquam te voce lacesat;

plenis urge cadis haec ubi signa vides.

Dum iam fastidit, dum nauseat ille Falernum,

emicat et subito magnus in ore rubor,

335increpat astantes saeva dum voce ministros,

pocla quod ante alios uberiora bibat,

si iam balbutiens verba imperfecta profatur,

saepe puellarem si petit aeger opem,

pocula si crebro lambit, si vina pytissat,

340et crebro ex udo si sputat ore merum,

callidus effundit si clamve palamve Falernum,

haec ferme victi signa bibentis erunt.

Iam prior exstinctis flammis deferbuit ardor;

urge mero: victas iam dabit ille manus.



345At si praeveniens aliquis te oppugnat et urget,

et iam vallavit obsidione meri,

accumulans cyathos cyathis, haustusque subinde

haustibus ingeminans, conduplicansque novis,

nec respirandi tibi linquitur ulla potestas,

350atque renitendi copia nulla datur,

hoc opus, hic labor est: cursum turbare ferocis

hostis, et e plana vertere vela via,

victoremque meri palma spoliare petita,

aut aequo saltem Marte redire domum.

355Fac ergo quotiens pugna es congressus iniqua,

et stant ante tuas pocula multa fores,

responde sensim, nec vina oblata recusa:

crede, suis audax viribus ille ruet.

Interea poscas magnum cratera ministrum,

360quem bibat alterna, te referente, vice.

Oblatum querulo si spreverit ore Falernum,

et debere palam te sibi multa docet,

et solvenda prius portati debita vini,

et sibi reddendum plenius esse vicem,

365“hactenus, ecce, a te tot pocula plena recepi,”

inque, “nec invito sedulus ore bibi.

Tu tamen hoc uno et primo cratere gravaris,

quem iussit summus me tibi ferre pudor.

Qui nisi honestarem te contra, ferreus essem,

370rusticiorque Scythis barbariorque Getis.
Pocula quae mihi adhuc a te sorbenda supersunt,
omnia non alia sedulitate bibam.”
Non ita inhumanus, neque erit sic truncus agrestis
ut queat hoc pacto vina negare tibi.
375Accepto vino, mox est de tramite pulsus,
versaue de cursu vela secunda suo.
Hinc tibi solvendi spatium tempusque parasti
debita, quae solvi flagitat ille sibi
nec metus est ne te properata protinus obba
380obruat, et celeri degravet usque mero.
Sunt sorbenda duo prius illi pocula: primum
quod sumpsit, demum quod tibi ferre cupit.
Interea facili dabitur tibi copia casu,
potando primum qua tueare locum
385quaue addas primo mox altera dona metallo;
mox dabit his alius tertia vina locus.
Hac te, non alia, evolves ratione Lyaeo
oppressum, si tu naviter usus eris.
Haec tibi praestabit vinosam regula palmam;
390haec mihi victoris nomen habere dedit.

O mihi praeteritos referat si Iuppiter annos,
qualis eram iuvenis plurima vina vorans,
dum firmæ stabant iuvenili in corpore vires
necdum dilapsum tempore robur erat,
395dum viridi fueram vini patientior aevo,
de vino referens multa tropaea domum!
Talibus instructus praeceptis, arte, magistro,
stravissem cunctos sorbitione meri.
Obvius haud quisquam mihi sese impune tulisset,
400seu venisset eques, seu foret ille pedes.
Hausissem Oceanos totos, vinique paludes
siccassem, oblatis vastaque stagna meri . . . !



625Fac praeceptorum studeas memor esse priorum;
sic tibi ferre queunt quae referentur, opem.
Est clipeo miles semper munitus et ense;
munitum clipeo te quoque et ense decet,
quo subitos ictus vini depellere possis,
630promptus et adversa spargere tela manu.

Grande tuas (nec sit tibi dura angustia mensae)

vas semper madidas excubet ante fores.

Hoc vice sit clipei, quo non utere duellum

dum tibi cum primis usque duobus erit,

635extra sed pugnam si quis te provocat, illo

perge lacescentis pellere vina mero.

Vina propinanti fer vina; ferire volentem

protinus educto tu simul ense feri.

Sic absterrebis, sic ensem continet ensis,

640pellendus clavo sic tibi clavus erit.

Hoc quoque praecipue (nec enim leve pondus habebit)

praeceptum memori condere mente stude:

Nil extra numerum velis acceptare Falerni,

nec quod ab obliquo tramite forte venit.

645Nemo bene potis est geminis incumbere bellis,

et bene nemo domi vina forisque bibit.

Dic praesto plures alios hic esse sodales,

sed te non cunctis posse referre vicem.

Sentis velle aliquos icto clam foedere tecum

650et coniurato belligerare mero.

Nil prius accepta quam foedus scindis iniquum,

ictum fallaci more sodalicii

solus ut exhibeas gravis ebrietate cachinnos.

“Qua ratione decet scindere foedus,” ais.

655“Conspirasse mero vos in me sentio,” dicas,

“sed nego me vestris viribus esse parem.

Solus vobiscum certamen inire recuso;

solus cum multis morio bella gerat.

Continuum Graio sed more bibamus in orbem

660si placet; haud alia condicione bibam.”

Hac ratione bibens, iuncto cum foedere iunctis,

defendes nulla cum gravitate locum.

Sic omnes unoque parique labore gravantur;

sic par ferre meri cogitur omnis onus;

665sed neque turbabit nunc hic te, aliunde sed ille,

nec clipeo excipies omnia tela tuo.

Nam qui non solus possis succumbere vino,

si praefixus eris omnibus ipse scopus?

At tu si quaeris cursus tardare secundos,

670quaeris currentes debilitare scyphos,

orbis in adversam poclum iaculabere partem

et prius emissis obvia vina cadis.

Denique vis quotiens aequo contendere Baccho,

haec servanda tibi regula semper erit.
675Nulla per obliquum, sed cuncta bibantur in orbem,
nec faciant ullas pocula missa cruces.
Hercule! amabilius nullum genus esse bibendi
hoc, neque vina magis candidiora scio.
Hoc nisi dum sorbent faciles utuntur amici;
680utitur hoc madidae gens bona Saxoniae
dum coctam Cererem potant crassosque liquores.
(Ei mihi, cur vinum non habet iste locus?
Digna mero gens est, superûm gens nectare digna,
quae tam fraterne pocula aquosa colit.)

685Hoc etiam tacitum, quamvis sit ponderis instar
haud magni, minime dissimulare queo:
ut nihil a genero capias, a sanguine iuncto
tantundem cape, me praecipiente, meri,
non si te rogitet, non si te culpet agrestem,
690dixerit et silices pectori inesse tuo.

Et quia rixosas damnant convivia causas
nec locus est inter libera vina foro,
inter rixantes orto certamine, vino
de dubio praeceps arbiter esse cave.
695Nec te teste reus quisquam dicatur, et ulli
alterius numquam nomine vina dabis.
Semper enim tales donaria digna reportant,
pondere quae certo vina priora gravant.



Quaedam firma parum dedimus praecepta bibendi,
700sed tamen ista simul non leve robur habent.
Haec sunt assiduum tibi confirmanda per usum,
citra quem possunt dogmata cuncta nihil.
Semper in eximiis potis est plus artibus usus,
quam praecepta scholas utilitate iuvant.
705Usu artes crescunt, usus facit esse magistros;
usum quisquis habet, grande iuvamen habet.
Quaelibet impigro perfectior ars fit ab usu.
Quis satis hunc merita tollere laude potest?
Hoc nisi firmatam tibi rite paraveris artem,
710ebrius immunda saepe iacebis humo,
sicut ego iacui non raro in stercore (cunctis
ei! destitutus artibus) inque luto.

Causa fuit lapsus, quoniam mihi defuit usus,
instructo nuda scilicet arte parum.

715Quapropter nostris praeceptis ipse iuvari
qui cupis, assidua pocula verte manu
atque assuesce merum portare capacius haustum,
ne te subvertant pocula trina cito.

Disce meis monitis vinum potare gradatim:

720pocula sex hodie, cras tibi pocula decem.

Qui modo fers vitulum, poteris mox ferre iuvenum,
si tua vis certos est habitura gradus.

Pone rudimentum non in fugiente Falerno,
non in diluto; fortia vina bibe.

725Quae si ferre vales, et aquatica ferre valebis
quae crescunt ripis, Necchare, cincta tuis.

Et bibe dum solidae iuvenili in corpore vires
florent, et genua dum tibi firma virent,
nec tua tardigrados certamina differ in annos:

730quo senior fies, hoc mage, miles, iners.

Nec tamen hanc artem mox infamabis, et illum

qui praecepta libens tradidit ista tibi,
vinoso quotiens fueris certamine victus;
tempore non omni victor abire potes.

735Sicut enim Martis dubia est, sic alea Bacchi;
ludunt fallaci vina favore quoque.

Non semper, licet armorum bellique peritus,
Hannibal e caesis hostibus arma tulit,
nec passim vitreas Trasimeni Poenus ad undas
740contudit Ausonios Marte favente duces,
nec te, sis nostra quamvis bene tritus in arte,
speres victorem semper ubique fore.

Porro ubi destitui cum vi te senseris arte,

debilitas artis fraude iuvanda tibi est—

745quamvis laudo minus factas in nectare fraudes:
qui fallit vino, fallit et ille fide.

Si tamen insidiis alios et fraude videbis
nitier, insidias vina bibendo strue.

Fraude sinunt Bacchi leges depellere fraudem,
750Caesaris ut vim vi pellere iura sinunt.

Fallere fallentes nulli solet esse rubori;
Cretensis mendax fraude petendus erit.

Quid prohibet Lapithas astu superare feroces,
Centaurosque truces vincere fraude meri?

755Sprevit Alexander furtivae praemia palmae,

nolens hostiles fundere nocte globos.
Tu mage Troiani laudabis verba Coroebi;
furari palmam grande putato decus.
Falle mero!—"Dolus an virtus, quis in hoste requirat?"

760Fallendi formas mille tenere potes:
corrumpendus erit parvo prius aere minister,
aut clam promissis alliciendus erit,
misceat ut reliquis fortissima vina, tibi uni
sobria supposita pocla ministret aqua.
765Lene merum modici tibi praebeat ille vigoris;
sorbeat annosum cetera turba merum.
Vina vetustatem portantia linque feroci;
si praesto est, mustum sedulo carpe novum.
Vinum dulce datur? Tu crebrius utere dulci
770(ebria dulce minus pectora, crede, facit).
Si tamen et reliquos delectant musta bibones,
ingere clam calici vina vetusta novo:
si depensus erit, facile excusabitur error;
pincernae peccat talia multa manus.
775Saepe foras exi mictum, lucrabere tempus
quo deturbantur debita vina loco
aut oblita tuus quae tandem negligit hostis;
non respondendo sic ego multa bibi.
Mitto alias fraudes simul insidiasque dolosque,
780quae possunt bibulis omnibus arte strui.

Si tamen urbane convivas fallere quaeris,
mox a conflati limine symposii,
pocula principio quae dantur cuncta recusans,
dic potum vires non bene ferre tuas.
785Corporis affecti simulatos finge dolores;
mendaci morbos fingere fronte decet.
Cuncta meri fore dona tibi gratissima, paulo
sed prius a morbo convaluisse gravi.
Inde bibenda tibi praescriptae vina diaetae,
790magna tibi rursus ni dare damna velis.
Haec excusantem nemo te ad pocula coget,
moribus incultis ni Polyphemus erit.
Post, ubi convivae primo incaluere Lyaeo,
insere sed placido vina benigna pede:
795"Ne me, convivae, fortasse putetis agrestem,
quamvis firma parum sit valetudo mea,
attamen hanc pateram plenam saliente Falerno
praebibo, vicino pignus amoris, ego."

Admissus tali ad communia pocula pacto,
800 tandem cum fessis dissimulata face.
Hac quoque fraude potes semel omne cavere Falernum,
arrident animo cum male vina tuo.

Profuit haec etiam nobis fallacia multum,
qua ferme potus saepius utor adhuc:
805 postquam paene mihi videor succumbere velle,
et multis cyathis membra gravata iacent
atque stupent omnes consumptae in pocula vires
nec nobis ultra spes opis ulla datur,
occulte madida titubans discedo palaestra
810 et fugio erranti fervida vina gradu.
Sic nondum accepto letali vulnere, memet
semianimem certae subtraho saepe neci.
Sperata palma spolio simul antibibones,
quam ferrent de me non abeunte prius.
815 Nil vetat exemplum cur non imitere magistri,
nec velit occultae te puduisse fugae.
Nescis Palladiis quid summus rhetor Athenis
fecerit, et factum non sine laude fuit.
Illum non puduit dici rhipaspida, quippe
820 vir fugiens iterum Bacchica bella geret.
Et tu cede prius quam quid committis inepti,
et fias bibulo fabula salsa choro.
Ergo ubi cuncta tibi vincendi est dempta potestas,
incipiant fessum vina referre pedem.
825 Nemo tuo sic se iactabit vulnere, nemo
clamabit victum te cecidisse mero.



Sed quid tundo tuas studiis puerilibus aures,
quaerendo varias sobrietatis opes?
Cur praeceptorum summam non promo meorum,
830 semper ut invicta pocula mente colas?
Dicam equidem, nec te suspensum, nate, tenebo,
qui semper salva cum ratione bibas.

Eoos inter magna virtute lapillos,
purpurea facie dicitur esse lapis;
835 ille Methen abigens et acrepala pharmaca praestans,
de virtute sua nobile nomen habet.
Cum Graeis Italiae gentes dicunt amethystum;

ille Gygis gemmis antefendus erit.
Quovis hunc pretio inventum mercare lapillum;
840vinciat articulos anulus iste tuos.
Ille tibi, si non fallit natura, bibenti
(talis inest illi vis) amethystus erit.
Perpetuae custos haec sobrietatis habetur,
et non sectandae gemma inimica Methe [= Μέθη].
845Aethiopum reges hoc delectantur et Indi,
quo bene securi vina perenne colunt.

Cui tamen hanc gemmam penuria denegat aeris,

ille sibi alterius pharmaca quaerat opis.
Plurima sunt nobis irritamenta bibendi;
850plurima quae pellunt, dat tibi mensa, Methen.
Raphanus est modico medicina parabilis aere;
ante merum sumptus, dissipat ille Methen.
Infensa origano nec vitibus aequa secundis
excludit nimiam brassica cruda Methen.
855Discutit hanc etiam gustatis sectile porrum;
arcet ieiunis caepa comesta Methen.
Nec tibi nequiquam laudatur amygdala gustu,
non quae sit dulcis, sed sit amara suo.
Nec male pulmo citae pecudis praesumitur assus,
860tantundem coryli, crede, valere nuces.
Et siccae fici possunt defendere siccos,
excitat at ficus non bene cocta sitim.
Profuit et meminisse croci prohibere valentis
haec mala, si quando, ceu decet, haustus erit.
865Sunt qui non dubitant etiam gustare cicutam
ante merum; res est insidiosa nimis;
talìa contingant inimicis pharmaca nostris!
Proderit his longe simpliciora sequi.
Tu quoque ferventi memor interpone Lyaeo,
870haustum de gelida iam bene potus aqua.
Discutit hic si quam contraxeris ebrietatem:
igneus opprimitur frigore fervor aquae.
Et quid hirundinei monstrem tibi pharmaca rostri,
quae tibi sumenti crapula nulla nocet?
875Ne suescas halimi supponere semina linguae,
undam Clitorio de neque fonte bibas.
Et bene conditas diverso pulvere cenas
sumere non avida, tiro, memento manu:
condimenta merum vel debile viribus augent;
880fortia, dic, quanto vina calore iuvant?

Quamquam reclamet medicorum turba, sed usu
hoc didici verum, quod loquor, esse nimis;
plus me quam medici movet experientia, quippe
quae solum medicos reddit et ipsa bonos.



885Haec quoque ad extremum praecepta prioribus adde

potanti numquam praetereunda tibi:
Nulla cum muliere meri certamen inibis,
nec cum multibiba congredieris anu.
Inveniuntur enim mirando gutture Bacchae,
890quae spernunt ipsum vina bibendo deum.
Quas bene Amazoniis possis conferre puellis,
quoslibet audentes sustinuisse viros.
Quamvis has vino vincis, victoria laudis
aut nihil, aut prorsus est habitura parum.
895Quippe tibi imbellis magnum et memorabile nomen
nulla dabit multo femina victa mero;
at si victus eris, cunctis ludibria fies,
quod vir ab imbelli victus es ipse manu,
sicut Pelidae non multum laudis Amazon
900victori virgo Penthesilea dedit.
Rectius, Aeneas Helenem iugulare Lacaenam
nolens, quae patriae causa ruentis erat.
In tali pugna, potius Cythereius heros
quam feras Aeacides, tiro, sequendus erit.
905Insuper est tibi mens ludibria plura cavendi,
et mala vinoso saepe ferenda? vide
ante ne decoctum lecto somnoque Falernum
ebrius e tectis egrediare tuis.
Haec tibi prima, puer, fuerint elementa bibendi;
910quae si cognoris, mox graviora dabo.
Quae nunc ferre nequis, prohibet quoque cetera Bacchus
effari puero, non nisi fanda seni.



Haec ego versiculis cecini iuvenatus ineptis,

quae qua scripta vides, hac quoque mente legas.
915Ut nobis vacua placuit nunc mente iocari,
sic quoque censebis carmina nostra iocum,
nec mihi propterea metuendos esse Tomitas

spero, nec Euxini frigora dura freti.
Non docui qua sint fallendae fraude puellae,
920nupta nec alterius quo capienda dolo.
Non scelerata sonat violati crimina lecti
ars mea, nec Veneris turpia furta sonat.
Oscula nulla docet, nisi quae figenda Lyaei
sunt placido plenis ore pudica cadis.
925Nullus amor, nullum nostro est in carmine stuprum;
nullum habet infandum nostra Camena scelus.
Sobria concessi monstravimus orgia Bacchi,
nonnumquam et liciti bella iocosa meri.
Iudicii ideo non sum damnandus iniquis;
930nec peccata Methes nec mala lustra probo,
nec me vinoso madidum de carmine cense:
ebria Musa mea est, sobria vita mihi.
Quod vinum gelidis ego poto libentius undis,
hoc mihi quis vitio vertere, quaeso, velit?

935At tu qui nostram non horres lividus artem
carpere et obliquo rodere dente, Theon,
non mala, non Diras tibi iniquior imprecor ullas,
Ibide quas memorat Naso poeta sua,
dummodo propitium numquam tibi numen Iacchi
940esse velit, potes ut bona vina semel.
Laetitia careat, careat dulcedine Bacchus,
improbe, spurcidico quem bibis ore Bavi.
Nullus contingat sitibundo nectaris haustus;
pellat vappa tuam, turbida faexque sitim.
945Degustes non lene merum, non dulce Falernum;
pendula vina bibas, mucida vina bibas.
Denique quando vides lepidos potare sodales
et nitida laetum sumere fronte diem,
despectus solus sedeas et ringere tristis,
950invida discruciat dum tua labra sitis.
Maenades et satyri demum (cei Penthea matres
Thebanae) lacerent te perimantque male,
et tua claudantur nullo sparsa ossa sepulchro,
quod rabido faciles carpseris ore iocos.

955Lusus habet finem, iuvenes date vina magistro;
non alia a vobis praemia namque peto,
dumque meam plenis cyathis versabitis artem,
discipuli, memores vos, precor, este mei.

APPENDIX

For Scholars

Throughout the text, I used the second edition to silently correct typos in the first edition, and vice versa. In the following cases I replaced a reading in both texts with a conjecture of my own.

Hamaxurgus' blurb: *praescipsit* for *praescribit*

1.115 *cyatho* for *scyatho*

1.160 *sibi* for *tibi*

1.321 *vitae* for *vivae* (hesitantly)

1.386 *monastra* for *monasta*

1.834 *prodeat* for *prodat ab*

1.920 *dicentem* for *dicenti*

1.975 *tanta* for *tanto*

1.1022 *sponsa* for *sponso*

1.1041 *haec* for *hoc*

2.82 *ille* for *illa*

2.169 *Paroenia* for *Paroemia*

2.221 *monticolae* for *monticulae*

2.297 *infatuat* for *fatuat*

2.300 *spectandos natis* for *spectandos et natis*

2.379 *capto* (sc. *tibi*) for *captus*

2.389 <*bibendo*>

2.449 *in somnifica* for *insomnifica*

2.514 *nec quicquam* for *ne quicquam*

2.569–70 and 2.571–72 are transposed to make *quintus* the fifth, not third, figure described.

2.576 *taetrius* for *tertius*

3.43 *Philoenus* for *Philaenus*

3.156 *eris* for *erit*

3.862 *at* for *et*

NOTES

Introduction

1. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism 2019; Levine 1978 gives the history.
2. Epistle 95.21.
3. Johnson 1989, 284. In 2017, Germans consumed 20.9 liters per capita (BSI n.d.).
4. Ovid: Hejduk 2014. Hamaxurgus: Muck 1879, 400. With line four of his poem compare *The Art of Drinking* 1.15 and 1.951; with six, 3.919–26.
5. Wilhelmi 2015.
6. Obsopoeus 1540, 278–79; compare *The Art of Drinking* 1.73–148.
7. Jegel 1940, 81.
8. MBW 490, p. 468.3: *ultra ipse proprio scelere quaerit alienationem*; MBW 489, p. 466: *homine non simpliciter furioso*; both letters date to 1526, a troubled year for him (Kobler 2014, 33; Fontaine 2019).
9. Camerarius 1568, S7v.
10. Camerarius 1568, S9v–T2r.
11. Obsopoeus left Camerarius' two Greek poems out of both editions; his Latin poem is reprinted on p. 2.
12. Compare *The Art of Drinking* 3.931–32.
13. Many of these translated epigrams became the source of Obsopoeus' huge expansion in the second edition of book 1 of *The Art of Drinking*.
14. Obsopoeus 1540, 282–83. In ancient Greece, Hippoclidus was a young man who ruined his chance to marry a princess by getting drunk and acting stupid at a party. In his drunken state, he claimed not to care (Herodotus 6.129–30). His response became proverbial in the sense of extreme frustration used here.
15. MBW 502.3, p. 495–96 (1526).
16. Simonsfeld 1902, 566–68.
17. Simonsfeld 1902, 568; compare *The Art of Drinking* 3.711–12 and 3.724–26.
18. Obsopoeus 1539, A4r, 1–2 and 11–14.
19. Johnson 1989.
20. 1536 = VD16 O 808; 1537 edition = VD16 O 809. Reprints: Wilhelmi 2015. German: Wickram 1537; English: Simpson 1945. Neither translation was of any help in constituting or interpreting the text.

Book 1. The Art of Drinking, Sustainably and with Discrimination

1. Drinking at home is discussed in vv. 73–184, going out in 197–458, and social functions start at 467.
2. An old pun on *vivere* (live it up) and *bibere* (drink); when tipsy, Romans

mispronounced *b* as *v* (Stadter 1968).

3. A pun on *sinus* (bosom or lap) and *sinum* (wine cup); compare 102 and see the introduction.
4. In the second edition Obsopoeus inserts six lines of needless misogyny. I omit them here.
5. Tibullus elegy 2.1.
6. Syrus ("Syrian") is the stereotypical name of slaves in Roman comedy.
7. The stereotypical name of blowhards in Latin literature, ultimately from Terence's *The Eunuch*.
8. Presumably they reject the 1536 Lutheran dogma of Sacramental union and regard Christ's body and blood as mere bread and wine. (And since Christ's blood is wine, Obsopoeus may intend a bit of irony.)
9. That is, they reject the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.
10. A character in Terence's *The Eunuch* (v. 105).
11. Literally, he'd be a "mute Amycla." Amycla(e) was an ancient town near Rome so committed to silence that it led to its destruction. The first "Greek societies," Pythagorean sects were closed communities in ancient Italy of voluntary adherents (both men and women); membership entailed a bid period, initiation, rituals, and secrets. In short, Pythagoreans were the original conspiratorial frat boys and sorority girls.
12. All figures from ancient Rome with reputations for morality that became proverbial.
13. *The Women from Andros* 66, thereafter proverbial.
14. Obsopoeus puns twice on two meanings of *sapere* (be wise or smart; have good taste).
15. In *Odyssey* 4.219–21. In the second edition Obsopoeus inserts 269 lines of examples here to illustrate the contention in lines 825–26, most of them translated from the Greek Anthology. Since the new lines distort the flow, I have removed them.
16. I.e., sense of humor.
17. That is, shots of wine the drinking game doesn't require you to take. The topic of drinking games dominates book 3.
18. Phemius: *Odyssey* books 1 and 23; Demodocus: *Odyssey* 8; Iopas: *Aeneid* 1.
19. *The Art of Love* 1.595–96.
20. *The Art of Love* 1.589–90; compare 1.903–4 and 2.627–28.
21. In Virgil, *Aeneid* 1.697–756; the quotes that follow are from 1.738–39 and 1.747.
22. *Iliad* 9.202–3.
23. *Iliad* 9.224–26.
24. The Latin pun is on *merum*, which means both "wine" and "pure and simple, mere."

Book 2. Excessive Drinking, What It Looks Like

1. Their stories are told in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (and elsewhere).
2. A Latin proverb.
3. Like Greek *methe* and Latin *ebrietas*, "drunkenness" can mean either intoxication (getting drunk) or addiction (alcoholism). Obsopoeus exploits this ambiguity at several points (see especially 2.811–70).
4. In fact, no such painting ever existed. In creating the haunting allegory of addiction and alcoholism that follows, Obsopoeus took inspiration from (1) Hieronymus Bosch's triptych *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (1490–1510) and (2)

- Renaissance re-creations of paintings by Apelles. The latter include both Venuses mentioned here (the *Venus Anadyomene*, imitated by Titian in c. 1520, and the *Aphrodite of Kos*, imitated by Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* in the 1480s) and *The Calumny of Apelles* (1480s), which Botticelli re-created from a description of Apelles' *Allegory of Calumny* in Lucian's dialogue *Slander, a Warning*.
5. An allusion to a famous lost painting by Pausias (see Pausanias 2.27.3), also mentioned in Camerarius' Greek liminary poem (not reprinted here).
 6. I thank Sophia Evans for this interpretation (an allusion to gambling, with the gems either dice or fancy-cut gemstones lost in the game), which seems better than "goats with eight feet throwing up gemstones." The donkeys of the next sentence are the Arcadian horses of 2.174.
 7. A thyrsus is a ritual staff of fennel topped with a pinecone, typically carried by Bacchus and his followers.
 8. Plutarch, *The Life of Demetrius* 1.4.
 9. 2.109–10.
 10. In the first case of substance addiction recorded in Western literature, Odysseus' companions in *Odyssey* 9 get hooked on lotus, a narcotic drug. The Sirens in *Odyssey* 12 are the classic case of a "bad influence": they sing an enchanting song that leads others to their doom but remain unscathed themselves.
 11. Here not Bacchus but God through Noah (Genesis 9:20). The bulleted points are common Jewish and Christian lore.
 12. Compare 2.149–50.
 13. A pun on *Germanus* (German) and *germanus* (brother, bro); see the introduction.
 14. Compare 2.196–97.
 15. Athenaeus 10.427f, "those who speak in proverbs well say that wine has no rudder."
 16. Compare 2.202.
 17. The monks of Heilsbronn Abbey.
 18. Roman folklore held that rainbows drew water from the ground and conveyed it to clouds (Virgil, *Georgics* 1.380).
 19. 2.519, refers to line 201.
 20. 1 Corinthians 6:10.
 21. Compare 2.195.
 22. Compare 1.952.
 23. *Iliad* 1.225, *oinobares*.
 24. In Apelles' painting, 2.223–42.
 25. Compare 2.207.
 26. The German Peasants' War of 1524–25.
 27. I.e., Falernian wine; compare Polybius 3.90.11.
 28. In the double sense that (1) death brings an end to drunkenness, and (2) death is Drunkenness' goal or aim.
 29. Obsopoeus inserts this digression in the second edition to answer the 1526 *Declamatio in laudem Ebrietatis* of Christoph Hegendorfer (1500–1540), a Leipzig schoolteacher active in his circles. The quotes he attributes to it are not exact.
 30. *Fervet olla, amicitia vivit*.
 31. Compare 2.653.

Book 3. How to Win at Drinking Games

1. Third-century usurpers, the former renowned for his impressive record in drinking contests, the latter for his champion drinking powers (Historia Augusta,

Firmus Saturninus Proculus et Bonosus).

2. God of revelry.
3. Novellius [*sic*] Torquatus of Milan (1st c. AD) could chug or funnel 2.5 gallons of wine—about 18 pints—in a single go; hence his nickname *tricongius*, a Roman measure of liquid equivalent to that amount. The Elder Pliny tells his story in *Natural History* 14.
4. See book 1, note 7.
5. Compare 1.952.
6. A Greek proverb; see Plato, *Euthydemus* 297c.
7. Legendary drinkers of ancient Rome.
8. The stereotypical savages of ancient Rome.
9. Vincent = victorious. Sadly, almost every word in lines 381–86 is ambiguous. The translation here is a best guess.
10. Here follows a tedious fever dream that could be called *The Ballad of Cypellomachus and Chandopotes*. Since it consists mostly of puns on innumerable Greek names for drinking vessels, I have omitted it.
11. In the Greek symposium.
12. Beer. (Ceres is the goddess of cereals and wheat.)
13. Obsopoeus varies a phrase in Plautus' *Pot of Gold* (230) that evidently became proverbial; see the introduction.
14. "All Cretans are liars" (Greek proverb).
15. Virgil, *Aeneid* 2.390.
16. A king of Lydia whose magic ring allowed him to turn invisible at will (Plato, *Republic* 2:359a–2:360d).
17. A magical spring in Arcadia (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 15.322–23).
18. Ovid was allegedly exiled to this region for writing a daring poem; see Hejduk 2014.
19. Ovid did, in *The Art of Love*.

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